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ABSTRACT

The papers included in this book were presented at a conference in San Francisco, just prior to the National Council of Teachers of English Convention. The speakers included specialists in children's literature, parents, librarians, school administrators, reading consultants, college professors of children's literature, and those informed on research in the field of reading. The speakers and titles of their talks are: May Hill Arbuthnot, "Dawn Wind Stirring: A Specialist Speaks"; Quail Hawkins, "Bright Is the Ring of Words: An Author Speaks"; Louise T. Van Orden, "Striking the Spark: A Teacher Speaks"; Winifred C. Ladley, "The Right Book: A Librarian Speaks"; Mrs. Kenneth A. Learned, "That They May Live Abundantly: A Parent Speaks"; Robert J. Bone, "The School's Influence: An Elementary Principal Speaks"; Tennessee Kent, "Children, Books and Teachers: A Superintendent Speaks"; Ruth Adair French, "Working the Vineyard: A Reading Consultant Speaks"; Charlotte S. Huck, "A Comprehensive Literature Program"; and Helen Huus, "Interpreting Research in Children's Literature." (WR)

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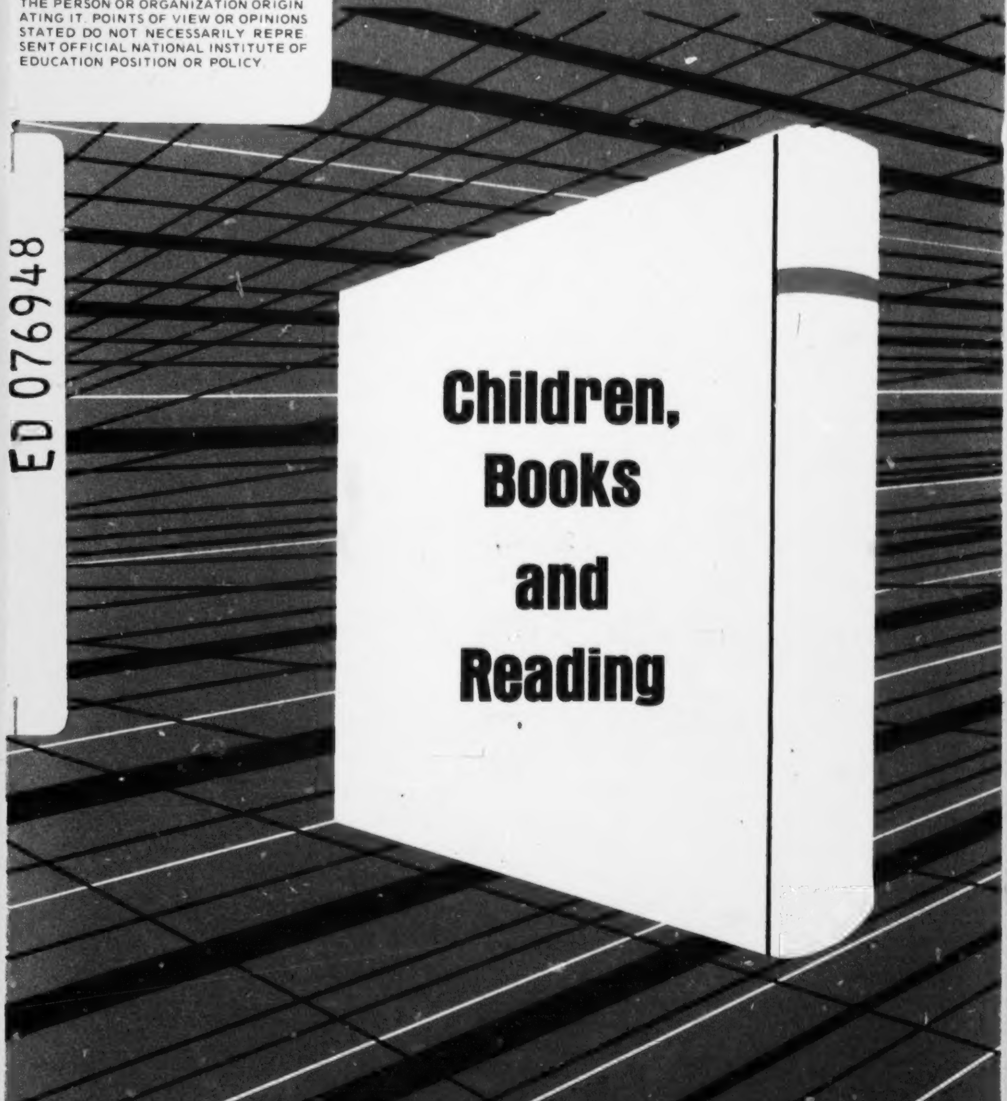

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CHILDREN, BOOKS and READING

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of the
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FOREWORD

The elementary teacher has two major functions in teaching children to read: (1) developing in them the skills which will enable them to read efficiently, and (2) cultivating within them a strong desire to read and an appreciation of worthwhile reading materials.

Research indicates that there is an urgent need for teachers to give more attention to the second of these functions. According to recent studies most students in school and adults as well are seriously limited in the amount of time they devote to voluntary reading and in the kinds of material which they choose to read. For this reason it seems timely that the International Reading Association should offer a book of helpful suggestions on developing interest in and taste for worthwhile reading materials.

The development of a hunger for reading in the elementary grades should be a cooperative undertaking combining the efforts of many people who touch the child's life. As an aid to such cooperative efforts it was thought that teachers would welcome not only practical suggestions for use in their own classrooms, but also for use in working with others concerned with the reading growth of children. Specialists in children's literature, parents, librarians, school administrators, reading consultants, college professors of children's literature and those informed on research in this field —all have possibilities of reinforcing the teacher's efforts. She needs to envision the contributions of people in each of these different roles, and to combine her efforts with them.

It was with this thought in mind that this book was prepared. As a first step outstanding specialists representing the different roles mentioned above were invited to prepare papers on the subject of CHILDREN, BOOKS AND READING. These papers were then presented at a conference in San Francisco, just prior to the National Council of Teachers of English convention, in facilities provided through their good offices. Highly qualified discussants were invited to supplement and enrich the presentation of each paper with their own viewpoints and ideas. This book brings to you the excellent presentations of people expert in their respective roles in developing interest and taste in reading, together with the important points made by the very competent discussants.

Deep appreciation is extended to Dr. Robert Karlin for implementing this project, to Dr. Ralph Staiger for countless acts of assistance, to William J. Kalenius, Jr. for his very competent execution of arrangements for the conference, and to Dr. Mildred Dawson for her expert work in editing the manuscripts for publication. Profound gratitude is extended to those who prepared the excellent material for the chapters in this book, and to the discussants for their stimulating and enriching discussions.

Nila Banton Smith
President, International
Reading Association
1963-64

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MAY HILL ARBUTHNOT

PROFESSOR EMERITUS, WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY

1. "Dawn Wind Stirring"

A Specialist Speaks

THE French entomologist, Jean Henri Fabre, writing about the migratory flight of butterflies, says this—

> The weather was stormy; the sky heavily clouded; the darkness profound. . . . It was across this maze of leafage and in absolute darkness, that the butterflies had to find their way in order to attain the end of their pilgrimage.
>
> Under such conditions the screech owl would not dare forsake its olive tree, but the butterfly goes forward without hesitation. . . . So well it directs its tortuous flight that, in spite of all the obstacles to be evaded, it arrives in a state of perfect freshness, its great wings intact. . . . The darkness is light enough. (2)

This phrase, "the darkness is light enough," has arresting significance for us today. On the national scene we are moving through such a darkness of violence, ill will, suspicion and fear that it is difficult to believe in a normal, healthy future. Yet the struggle goes on, nationally and internationally, to reach light through the blackness.

On the personal side, most of us have known long stretches of darkness, perhaps days of tragedy and despair. Yet the mere fact that we are here today, thinking and planning for children, means that for us also the dark is light enough. Call this quality courage, or the will to live, or faith, the fact remains that it is the quality of strong people. Robert Frost speaks of courage again and again in many different ways. In an early poem of his called "Acceptance" he wrote

Now let the night be dark for all of me.
Let the night be too dark for me to see
Into the future. Let what will be, be.

And he faces the unknown with courage and "morning gladness."

Now children do not come by this sort of courage easily. Because they *are* children, they have all sorts of timidities and insecurities to overcome. But courage is a quality they greatly admire both in animals and human beings, and since children tend to imitate what they admire, this image of the hero is important in their reading and in their growing concepts of the kind of persons they would like to be.

No writer for children and youth has used the theme of heroic struggle through darkness toward the light more continuously than the English writer Rosemary Sutcliff. Her books are complex accounts of England's earliest history, with continuous wars for occupation. The teeming action of every book takes place against the haunting beauty of a land so beloved that invaders and defenders were willing to die for it. And her heroes also fight for principles they value and which we still value in this chaotic world of ours. In her famous trilogy — *Eagle of the Ninth, The Silver Branch* and *The Lantern Bearers* — the Roman hero, Aquila, is sometimes the victor, sometimes defeated and enslaved, but never finished. In the last book a friend sums up their epic struggles.

> It may be that the night will close over us in the end, but I believe that morning will come again. . . . We are Lantern Bearers, my friend; for us to keep something burning, to carry what light we can forward into the darkness and the wind.

The implication of this is evident for our day, and in every one of her books the past speaks strongly to our generation. These books are for youth and the oldest children in elementary schools, and *Dawn Wind* (61) is perhaps the simplest to start with. The hero, Owain, seems to be the sole survivor of a bloody battle in which the Saxons have annihilated his people. When Owain starts walking out of this field of the dead, he is joined by a dog and later by a half-starved waif of a girl, Regina. At first, the three stay together in desperate search for and sharing of food and shelter. Then later they are bound together in respect and affection. So when Regina becomes desperately ill, Owain carries her straight into the enemy's camp, knowing what it will mean to him. The Saxons keep the girl but sell Owain into thralldom, and he is carried away by his new master. It is years before he is free and can go back to Regina, but she has always known he would come.

> "Are we going to Gaul?" Regina asked carefully, after a few moments.
>
> "No. That was for the dark; now, there is a dawn wind stirring. . . . We are going southwest into the hills. There was an old woman and an

> old man there . . . they were kind to me once. . . . "
>
> "And if they are not still there?"
>
> "Then we'll build a turf hut and light a fire in it, and in-take a patch of hillside, and I'll find a sheep to go with your little brown hen," Owain said.

So life is not snuffed out by darkness. "A dawn wind is stirring," and for two people life begins again. That is the message of these superb books by Rosemary Sutcliff.

For some reason, perhaps because of the troublous times in which we are living, historical fiction for children of upper elementary and high school ages is stronger than in any other area. The year 1963 brought two historical novels of rare distinction. The first one is *Hakon of Rogen Saga* by Erik Haugaard, a story of Viking days even earlier in historical chronology than the Sutcliff books. It too carries a boy, bereft of family and his birthright of land, through enslavement, struggle and eventual triumph. Again like the Sutcliff books no briefing of the action can give any conception of the richness and absorbing story quality, with the image of the hero emerging clearly.

The second rare historical novel of 1963 is *Faraway Lurs* by the poet, Harry Behn. It has already spellbound eleven- and twelve-year-olds as well as teenagers and adults. They are reading and then rereading the Introduction—it is so simply and beautifully written and so eerie. Those who do not like this book say it is morbid. The nobility of the characters saves it. The author tells about his journey to his mother's birthplace in Denmark with the intention of writing her biography. But searching for a huge mound she had told him about, perhaps a Viking grave, he discovered instead a shallow pit with some damp stones at the base. Bound up with this excavation was the story of a girl who had lived there some three thousand years ago. Hers was a grave unlike any the Royal Museum of Copenhagen had ever excavated. It was a wet grave. The coffin, carved from a single tree, had been placed on a platform over a small spring for the better preservation of this important person. What they found was the body of a girl, beautiful, no more than eighteen years old, with her blond hair tied in a pony tail and her ten little finger nails neatly manicured. She was a Stone Age girl who belonged to the peaceful Forest folk, worshippers of trees. But she was wearing crudely made Bronze Age jewelry of the sort created by the Warlike Sun People. From this strange conflict of peoples and periods, Harry Behn has recreated the girl's story, deeply moving in its Romeo and Juliet romance and tragedy. This is a book for reading aloud in the family, and it is enough to fire the imagination of any child with a feeling for the tantalizing puzzles the history of far-off days must always suggest.

Now, of course, historical fiction begins at a much simpler level for young children, with such stories as Alice Dalgliesh's *Bears on Hemlock Mountain* or *The Courage of Sarah Noble*. The former is a tale of resourcefulness in the face of fear, and is not only a thriller but a chiller for the primary. Eight-year-old Sarah Noble, in the wilderness with her father, also has good reasons to be afraid. But the crowning blow comes when her father has to go back to fetch the family and leaves Sarah with the Indians. Then fear really envelops young Sarah. An unusually timid eight-year-old was asked, "Do you think you could have done what Sarah did?" Her eyes grew big as saucers, but she said slowly, "I'd be scared stiff . . . but sure, I could do it." That is the impact historical fiction and biography make on children and youth. They carry the impressive weight of reality. Unconsciously children think, "Well, if he did it, so could I."

That is why the simply written historical stories of Clyde Bulla are so good for children, also William Steele's rousing boy stories of frontier life. In the latter, the boys grow in the course of their adventures. They often start out ignorant, wrong-headed and stubborn; but life changes them, and slowly they begin to emerge from their own limitations. *Winter Danger* is a good example. In that book the boy almost hates his father—"a woodsy" or hunter—and the miserable way they live. The boy longs for the settled life of a farm, the security of a settlement, and presently he gets these when his father leaves him with relatives. But through the terrible ordeal of that starvation winter, the boy learns that the only security we have in this world, we must make for ourselves.

Strong themes generate strong stories. Look at recent examples of historical fiction which have won the Newbery Medal—Latham's *Carry On, Mr. Bowditch,* Keith's *Rifles for Watie,* Speare's *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* and *The Bronze Bow,* and O'Dell's *Island of the Blue Dolphins.* The theme of each one of these books speaks to the problems of this generation in the course of an absorbing story. And in each book there is a struggle against darkness with, in the end, a dawn wind of hope blowing strong.

Children, by the way, do not distinguish between historical fiction and biography. That is, Johnny Tremain, in the book of that name, is as real a person to them as Paul Revere who appears in the same story. This is our clue for using both these forms of literature. If both are soundly written from the standpoint of history, they reinforce each other. Take the men and the period of the American Revolution. Along with the biographies of Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, Patrick Henry and the others use *Johnny Tremain* by Esther Forbes and *Tree of Freedom* by Rebecca Caudill. So if children are reading biographies of Lincoln and Robert Lee or Stonewall Jackson and Grant, Harold Keith's *Rifles for Watie* will help them to understand the courage and suffering of men and boys on both sides of the conflict. And in all this reading our business is to help children to see beyond the old men, dying alone or in obscurity, to the glory of their struggle. Columbus died in prison, neglected and forgotten, but not defeated. The glory of his name and his achievements lives after him. Lincoln was assassinated, but, as one boy wrote, "He lives in the heart of everyone."

Lest children get the idea that you must be dead in order to be a hero, books about their own times are of great importance. But look for books that have substantial themes, well drawn characters, and good style in the telling. Themes built around the need to achieve and the need, both to be loved and to bestow love, are vital at every age to a child's dreams of himself as a competent and accepted person.

Beginning with picture-stories for the youngest, many children enjoy the *Madeline* series by the late Ludwig Bemelmans because Madeline is a rugged individualist who does things. The other little girls may walk in two straight lines, but not Madeline. She manages to get a fine case of appendicitis and care in the hospital with lots of attention; Madeline falls off the bridge and is rescued; Madeline tames the horrid little boy next door. She is indeed an achiever! Edward Ardizzone's *Little Tim* is another, a regular do-it-yourself hero who survives fires and shipwrecks, and when he mislays his parents he manages to find them again all on his own. *Curious George* (Rey), *Mike Mulligan* (Burton) are also independent achievers beloved by all picture-story addicts. Last year brought us a big, beautifully illustrated book for the primary by a fifteen-year-old Greek girl, Heidrun Petrides. It is called *Hans and Peter* and there is achievement on an imposing scale. Hans lived so high up he could see only roofs and chimneys. Peter lived sub-sidewalk, so he saw only feet and legs. Both boys yearned for a little house with a view of flowers, fields and meadows. That is all they had to start with, just their dream! But how little by little they made their dream come true is a story of courageous action, resourcefulness and more creative imagination than most people possess.

The theme of loving and being loved is equally satisfying and important to the child's concept of himself. That is why, after thirty years, children still enjoy Wanda Gag's ***Millions of Cats*** because that homely, lonely cat managed to find love and security for herself. This year there is a charming picture-story that carries the bestowal of love to a more mature level. It is called ***Joel and the Wild Goose*** by Helga Sandburg. The theme, incidentally, is better than the writing. That a little boy, who is heart-hungry for a pet of his own, could rescue and cherish a big wild goose, and love it so deeply that when spring came again bringing flocks of wild geese, Joel could cry, "Fly, Wild Goose!" and let his pet go—that indeed is love. Love motivates every one of those heart-warming ***Orpheline*** stories by Natalie Carlson. The little girls love Mme. Flatot and Génevieve so much they never wish to be adopted. They cherish a baby abandoned on their doorstep. They give their hearts to first one kind of a pet and then another before they can choose. The stories have a great deal of humor, and are all warmth, without sentimentality. This is true also of Mrs. Carlson's ***Family Under the Bridge*** which is motivated by Suzy's pronouncement that "Mama says, 'Families must stick together, no matter what!' "

This love and loyalty of the family group is brought out in some of our fine regional stories beginning with that distinguished book by Doris Gates, *Blue Willow*. To Janey, moving with her family from place to place following the crops, that blue willow plate was the symbol of the settled home they would surely have some day. Meanwhile, deep family affection helped to compensate for their deprivations and motivate their struggles. This family love lifts the characters in Lois Lenski's *Strawberry Girl, Cotton in My Sack,* and others above the squalor in which they live. Love for his brother Gabriel and desire to succeed in the family work, herding sheep, motivate everything Miguel does in that Newbery winning book, *And Now Miguel,* by Joseph Krumgold. Indeed, the need to love and to be loved and the need to achieve competence are two themes that motivate stories for all ages—from early childhood through maturity. There is a 1963 book of unusual significance, called *The Loner,* by Ester Wier that uses both themes.

Boy had no name, no family, no home. He had been picking crops for as long as he could remember, giving his earnings to whatever group would shelter and feed him. He was sure there was only one way to get along in the world and that was by looking after yourself and no one else, so when he was left behind, sick and half starved, he didn't blame the people. You just couldn't afford to care about other folks, only yourself. That's the way it was. Then he met yellow-haired Raidy who took in all the strays and included Boy in the circle of her kindness. When she was killed looking out for him, it was more than he could bear. Why hadn't she just looked out for herself? Heartbroken, hungry and at the end of his strength, Boy wandered off into the wilderness, lay down and cried himself to sleep. He was rescued and nursed back to health by a remarkable woman known as Boss. She was herding 900 sheep with only the help of two dogs. Boss found a name for her protégé, David, which seemed to them both a good omen because David was a shepherd and that was what Boy would be. Poor David! He soon came to adore Boss, the wild, beautiful country, the dogs, and even the silly sheep; but he was untrained in responsibility, and he not only made mistakes, but he lacked the courage to own up to them. After all, he had to look out for himself. Finally, when David failed flagrantly in his faithfulness and imperiled the whole flock, Boss turned on him savagely and cast him out of her favor and trust. From the depths of his humiliation and despair all that saved David was that, as Boss showed him his incompetence and unworthiness, she also painted for him a clear picture of what he might be —a skilled, resourceful shepherd, using every ounce of his strength, initiative, ingenuity and courage to safeguard his flock. It was this picture of himself as a strong, competent, selfless person that kept David struggling. From the depths of his despair he disciplined himself until at last he could and did measure up to Boss' standards of a shepherd. But never as long as he lived would he forget the misery of those days when he had no one but himself to live for, shut out from love by his own heedless selfishness.

This pride in excellence, in work thoroughly and expertly performed, is what children and youth often lack today, partly because over fifty per cent of them are city dwellers. The apartment boy is even robbed of the pride that comes from a well-kept yard or garden. Bread and cake mixes and frozen foods prevent girls from enjoying the heady triumph of preparing hearty and delectable foods from scratch. What work can this urban child find that will command his utmost efforts, skill and respect? Literature so often shows the way. Let's hope for an urban story that offers some respectable substitutes for sheep herding, sugaring off, or 4-H activities.

If these examples from realistic literature seem overly earnest, it is the fault of the briefing, because everyone of them is a compelling story with plenty of action. And for fun there are always the *Henry Huggins* series by Beverly Cleary and the inimitable *Henry Reed, Inc.* by Keith Robertson. Even so, children need also a release from reality now and then. The drives and pressures of the adult world and the routines of children's lives are sometimes too relentless. They hunger for fun and fantasy to balance facts and responsibilities. Fortunately, there is a rich literature to satisfy these needs.

Young children, lucky enough to hear the folk tales well told, identify themselves with all those redoubtable achievers—"The Brementown Musicians" driving off the robbers and settling down to snug security, "Hansel and Gretel" outwitting the wicked witch, Boots riding up a glasshill and winning the Princess and half the kingdom into the bargain, and the third pig putting an end to the big bad wolf. These are fear-banishing, wish-fulfilling tales that reiterate the old verities every child ought to learn early. They say to a child, if you have courage, a kind heart and keep your wits about you, obstacles, ogres, witches and wolves can be annihilated. But mind you do *keep* your wits about you, because Miss Addle-Pated Credulity who walks into Foxy-Loxy's den will never come out again, and, as for those mean, lazy, cruel, characters, eventually they get theirs too, and that's that!

Even more white white and black black are the little stories we know as fables. It seems odd that we should be having such a run on these today. Barbara Cooney's *Chanticleer* and Marcia Brown's *Once a Mouse* are both fables delectably illustrated, and both won Caldecott Medals. Katherine Evans has adapted several fables and given them charming pictures, and Janice Holland has returned to the book scene with a delightful Chinese fable, *You Never Can Tell* for which the beautiful illustrations and the laconic philosophy are both in Chinese style. There are also a half dozen recent well illustrated editions of *Aesop's Fables.* Why are publishers reviving these old moralities and giving them the emphasis of handsome pictures? Perhaps because they *are* moralities which children have been missing and should know.

Librarians tell us there is also a revival of interest in myth, especially the Greek or Roman, and, despite a flood of new editions, the library shelves containing myths are generally empty. This revival, too, is encouraging because, although the myths are only glorified fairy tales, there is an imaginative beauty about these tales that has captured the imagination of poets, painters and sculptors over the years; and myths may help to prevent the older children of this generation from settling into a too tight literalness too young. This traditional literature has other values too.

Whereas the folk tales keep reassuring young children that while giants, ogres, and witch wives do exist, virtue will triumph in the end. For the youngest pilgrims, that is good. It builds up their courage and desire to tackle hard tasks. But for the older children, myth shows them plenty of trickery and chicanery, and what's more the heroes do not always come through. Perseus and Theseus survived their exploits, but poor Phaethon failed tragically. Children should hear the conclusion of the story as Ovid gives it.

> . . . Phaethon, the flames consuming his yellow hair, is hurled headlong, and is borne in a long tract through the air; as sometimes a star may appear to fall, although it has not really fallen. . . . The Hesperian Naiads commit his body, smoking from the three-forked flames, to the tomb, and inscribe these verses on the stone: — "Here is Phaethon buried, the driver of his father's chariot, which if he did not manage, still he miscarried in a great attempt. (3)

There it is again, as in biography—the hero may appear to fall but he is not defeated, because the struggle was glorious and his name and his deeds live after him.

Myth should lead naturally into the epics—*The Odyssey* (Colum), *Sons of the Volsung* (Hosford) and romantic *Robin Hood* (Pyle)—but in most of our United States this is not happening. Such epics as the children encounter in their school experiences are postponed until high school years where they most certainly do not belong. By that time, teenagers want the astronauts in orbit, breaking through the earth's atmosphere with the aid of intricate machines and calculations. Besides, what foolishness to have Odysseus outwit a one-eyed giant! This is child-sized literature and it is *children* who should encounter the Cyclops, the sirens and the Lotus-eaters, and know them for what they are. In terms of colorful characters these old tales dramatize strength and weakness, good and evil, in memorable ways. They have entered our thought and our language as the picturesque symbols they are. Can we afford to let children miss them?

Oddly enough, in this age of machines and missiles, bombs and war threats, the modern fanciful tales have never been more popular with children nor better written. For sheer hilarity and virtuosity Theodore Seuss Geisel still leads all comers. Although he has never done pure fantasy to surpass his early *500 Hats for Bartholomew Cubbins,* nor a nonsense tale funnier than *Horton Hatches an Egg,* even today, when he is shackled by vocabulary limitations, he still has a way with words that delights the ear and touches off the risibles. But let's hope he doesn't go thinner and thinner.

Not every eight- or nine-year-old appreciates the more subtle whimsey of Milne's *Pooh* books, but every child should encounter Christopher and the Bear-of-Little-Brain for fun, and then, if their antics are not fun for him, try something else, Robert Lawson's *Rabbit Hill* and *The Tough Winter* perhaps. So it is with the Narnia books by C. S. Lewis for older children. Not all of them can walk through that magical wardrobe and enter into the conflict between the Witch and the Lion. But when children do like these books, they read the whole series; and no realistic tale has ever made the battle between good and evil, light and darkness more dramatic than these superbly written fantasies. So *The Gammage Cup* by Carol Kendall and the matchless *Children of the Green Knowe* by Lucy Boston are perhaps also for the special child, but beloved by all children are those rare fantasies, *Charlotte's Web* by E. B. White and *The Borrowers* by Mary Norton. Certainly *Charlotte* is already a classic in everything but years, and, together with *The Borrowers,* these books offer children both laughter and tears. This is good. Children need the therapy of laughter but they need also the therapy of tears if they are to learn compassion.

Animal stories provide plenty of tears. Read a lot of them at one time and you find yourself, like Alice, sunk in a pool of your own tears. It began with that genteel Victorian horse *Black Beauty* (Sewell), an overly humanized animal, a martyr to the check rein. Young readers used to cry all the way through the book. As propaganda it was good, as a horse story it wasn't. *Smoky* (James) set the record straight and remains a classic example of an animal story written with fidelity to the species, never humanized, never sentimentalized, a model for most of our modern writers of animal tales. Marguerite Henry, Jim Kjelgaard, Joseph Lippincott, Jean and John George, and the two memorable animal stories of 1961, *Incredible Journey* by Sheila Burnford and *Stranger at the Green Knowe* by Lucy Boston, provide young readers with stories of great distinction. These books and writers have such powerful story-appeal that the wonder is children get around to reading anything else. The special value in animal tales is that they stress those virtues a child most admires —courage, loyalty and a gay zest for life. They also show him the pitiable vulnerability of animals and call out his compassion and desire to cherish and protect.

In conclusion, what has this discussion of certain books in various areas of children's reading interests been driving at? Mr. Epstein's article in *Wilson Library Bulletin* (October, 1963) suggests that genteel but over-anxious ladies (both teachers and librarians, we assume,) are in a conspiracy to make children conscious, by way of their books, of the fears and frustrations that haunt our adult world. How does he think we can keep children oblivious of these anxieties? Pictorial magazines carry into our homes today such close-ups of horror and brutality as children's eyes have never been subjected to before. Daily and hourly the newscasters intone their rituals of despair. We rise in the morning, put on the coffee and turn on the gloom. However, if in addition to these unavoidable impingements of adult problems on the child's consciousness, we feed him books that are little more than story-coated pills of propaganda for this cause or that—and there are plenty of them—then the gentleman is right. We are robbing the child of what he should find in his reading, namely, laughter, heroic adventure, sudden unexpected delight, glimpses of himself in book heroes with a growing sense of the part he too may play in life. The sheer entertainment value of fine books can provide all these and more. It may seem naïve to say that children's reading should also give them clear ideas of good and evil, but this is true and needful. To counteract the love of ease and the crass materialism of our age, children's reading should also clarify their understanding that hardships, deprivations and struggle are a part of life for every generation. The important thing is that their reading shall make them feel that life is worth the struggle. It can be good and it may be glorious. From such books as we have mentioned comes the image of the hero—sometimes defeated, sometimes wrong, but picking himself up to resume the struggle. If from such books, and many others, a child begins to see himself growing into a competent and honorable maturity, then indeed for him "a dawn wind is stirring." No one has summarized a child's glimpse of his future life stretching ahead, rich in promise, as aptly as Mary Austin (1), the mystic and poet, when she put into the mouth of an Indian boy this—

SONG OF GREATNESS

When I hear the old men

Shall do mightily.

REFERENCES

1. Austin, Mary. *Children Sing in the Far West.* Houghton, 1928 (Out of print).
2. Fry, Christopher. *The Dark is Light Enough.* Oxford, 1954 (Qotes Fabre; no source given).
3. *The Metamorphoses of Ovid.* Literally translated into English prose by Henry T. Riley.

(*Note: Alphabetized listing of children's books appears in the appendix.*)

DISCUSSION

DR. AUSTIN: In our recent national tragedy, courage has emerged through our darkest hours; and particularly significant is Mrs. Arbuthnot's reference to the books by Rosemary Sutcliff which center around the theme of heroic struggle. They reassure adults as well as youth that life is not snuffed out by darkness, that indeed a dawn wind is stirring. Courage is a characteristic that appeals to older girls and boys, perhaps because they enjoy living vicariously as brave persons do, perhaps because they are striving to find the ingredients for themselves. I would add Bill Davidson's *Six Brave Presidents,* a powerful book for children. As President Kennedy in his choices pointed out—valor among presidents and senators shows up in unexpected places and is not limited to the brilliant and illustrious.

For one reason or another, historical fiction for children is gaining in strength and in value. Typical of this high quality is Ronald Welch's *Knight Crusader,* which won the Carnegie Medal. The story achieved a nice balance in portraying the reality of the Third Crusade in rich detail without indicating the sheer brutality, cruelty and filth of the period.

While I would agree that Theodore Geisel (Dr. Seuss) is one of our unique authors of children's literature, his recent books with their limited vocabulary and thin plots are beneath this great man and his talents. ***And to Think I Saw I on Mulberry Street, 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins*** **and *Horton Hatches*** *the Egg* are true classics, and let's hope that Seuss will return to books of such caliber.

Like Mrs. Arbuthnot, I believe that books are no substitute for living, but they can add immeasurably to its richness. When life is absorbing, books can enhance our sense of its significance. When it is difficult, they can give us momentary release from trouble or new insight into our problems.

Dr. Bracken: Mrs. Arbuthnot reminded us of the importance of leading children to all types of literature, especially that which inspires courage. Then, when she mentioned fantasy, my thoughts turned to my dismay with college students in a children's literature class who too often seem insensitive to fantasy and nonsense. They do not think *Alice in Wonderland* delightful fun and ask, "What is the point?" in reading Edward Lear. Ruth Strang, in checking the ideas of eighth graders, found that there was no spark of amusement in reading about the old man whose beard harbored "an owl and a hen, four larks and a wren." They responded in this serious vein: "It is very unusual to see an old man with a bird's nest in his beard."

Dr. Anderson: Mrs. Arbuthnot emphasized the importance of good and worthy themes as a criterion for judging literature. I find that it is our task as teachers to see that the theme emerges from the story in the minds of those who read a book. My students in college classes and their elementary school pupils were asked to identify the theme of Scott O'Dell's *Island of the Blue Dolphin*. They missed it until the author himself came and explained that the theme is survival through forgiveness. The lone Indian girl lived the life of Robinson Crusoe and survived by caring for the dog that had killed her young brother and that later became her protector.

You would be surprised to find the lack of depth of understanding by those who are charmed by such stories as *Wait for William* or *Wagtail Bess*. In my experience, children find these books much more important, much more significant after they are subtly helped to discover the message the author is presenting.

The image of the hero, so beautifully presented by Mrs. Arbuthnot, is one we need to consider very carefully. The masculine association with weapons as a solution for human problems as shown on television and in nearly all our Western folklore needs to be evaluated. I speak as a teacher, an army officer, a citizen. Too often this concept of heroism and these ways of solving problems are unsuited to the urban life of today. As Mrs. Arbuthnot indicated, we do, indeed, need stories about and for urban children.

One statement Mrs. Arbuthnot made deserves repeating: Let's hope for an urban story that offers some respectable substitute for sheepherding, sugaring off, and 4-H club activities. Such stories need to be written, but by authors who know the city, who know children; but I am afraid the stories will not be published until some of the editors and some of the companies stop living in the memories of our world past.

QUESTION: How do you feel about the adaptation of epics and myths for editions intended for children; for instance, the *Canterbury Tales?*

DR. ARBUTHNOT: Remember that President Conant said he would rather a child read an adapted version of a great book than never to encounter it in any way. I think that is true; but today in the case of epics and myths, we have a wide choice. Some are better than others, and nearly all are handsomely illustrated. It is the teacher's business to get in and examine the adaptation to see how well or trivially it has been done.

I don't see any reason for adapting the *Canterbury Tales* for children. Of course, Barbara Cooney took that little excerpt from the "Nun's Tale" and did *Chanticleer,* and that seems perfectly permissible. But for the most part, this is a case of adapting something that belongs at a later stage. It doesn't belong in the elementary school.

ANDERSON: I think the new interest in the myth is because of the bigness of life that they portray, in contrast to the petty stuff we have in much of children's literature.

HAWKINS: Certain judicious cutting sometimes can bring to a child a book that he would otherwise never read. I think of *Pilgrim's Progress* which, as a child, I tried valiantly to read but found that I was unable to get through the verbiage of long religious discussions. Later I came across a cut version by Meredith Doffin, which I read to a niece of mine who was really excited over the story.

But thirty years ago a series of books came out which featured rewritings of the classics. In them all the colorful words were cut out, and you did have a very dull, lacking-in-brilliance story. May Lampton Becker, in reviewing the series, ripped the series up one side and down the other.

QUAIL HAWKINS

AUTHOR AND CONSULTANT IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS

2. Bright Is the Ring of Words

An Author Speaks

MANY people seem to believe that the writer of books for children is practicing on children in the hope that some day he will be able to write for adults. Many times people have said to me rather patronizingly, "You write for children—never mind, some day maybe you will write for grown-ups."

As a matter of fact, writing for children is a highly specialized gift and craft. Many famous authors have written books which made their strongest appeal to children. *Tom Sawyer* is an obvious example of a book written for children by a world-famous author. *Robinson Crusoe* was written for adults, but children have made it their own.

The author of books for children has to have two indispensable gifts. He must be able to return in imagination to his own remembered childhood and recreate for children of a different generation what is universal in childhood. He must also appeal to both children and grown-ups.

Make no mistake about it: a book that does not please adults never reaches the child. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but it is a fact to be reckoned with by an author. The manuscript is written by an adult, submitted to an adult editor for possible publication. Upon acceptance the book is illustrated by an adult artist, physically planned by adult production managers, sold to bookstores through adult advertising and publishers' salesmen, submitted to adult reviewers and librarians, and at last bought by librarians, grandparents, parents and related adults. Only occasionally at the end of this process is the child consulted.

All these adults leave their imprint on the book for good or ill. A delightful story may be overlooked because of a poor jacket, slovenly bookmaking or unimaginative illustrations. Very mediocre books may be given to children by grown-ups who are attracted by the illustrations and makeup. But the child decides the fate of a book in the end. If it does not attract him, its life is short. You can lead a child to literature, but you cannot make him read.

The writer of books for children must also know the difference between the child reader and adult reader. Not all stories *about* children are *for* children. One of the real pleasures of writing for children is their capacity for enjoyment. They are full of curiosity, wanting to know the whys of everything they see, hear, smell, feel or taste. Their capacity for discovery is what makes every day exciting to the child. The world is still "so new and all," and the routine of adult living has not yet put its paralyzing hand upon him.

For a child, life is a series of new experiences, of discoveries—some pleasant, some horrifying. All have to be sorted, evaluated and laid away in the child's mind and heart. Think back on some of your own discoveries; the first satin-smooth taste of cream cheese upon the tongue—the excitement upon seeing for the first time a ladyslipper delicately pink against the rich blackness of the earth still damp from melting snow; a land-locked child's first sight of surf rolling in upon the sandy beach, receding with a slight hiss, tiny sandpipers dancing in its wake like a miniature ballet; or the first time you met in a book a character who became your friend for life. I still remember the chills of excitement running up and down my spine when, as a five-year-old sitting on my father's lap, I heard him read for the first time in my hearing, "The Mole had been working very hard all the morning, spring-cleaning his little home. First with brooms, then with dusters; then on ladders and steps and chairs, with a brush and a pail of whitewash; till he had dust in his throat and eyes, and splashes of whitewash all over his black fur, and an aching back and weary arms." Forever after Grahame's *Wind in the Willows* and spring have been intermingled in my mind.

Children live a life of continual wonder and surprise. Touch a button, and a dark room springs into light. Turn a knob and a screen flashes to life in a series of pictures complete with sound. Magic is everywhere, and a child is easily able to believe in miraculous animals that speak, in flying carpets, in giants—they live among giants—and trolls. Children know no end to magic. Every day brings new wonders and new extensions of knowledge.

Too, children are close to the primitive and the world of animals. This is true even of children who seldom see any wild life. This affinity may account for the popularity of such different books about animals as

The Tale of Peter Rabbit, The Jungle Books, Kildee House, and *My Friend Flicka.*

To some extent it explains the fascination for children of books about prehistoric animals. They never seem to tire of tales of Brontosaurus, of Triceratops, of sabre-tooth tigers and the woolly mammoth. One of the thrills of my early reading was a series of readers by Katherine Dopp about the life of primitive man from *The Tree Dwellers* on through the cave days to *The Early Sea People.* This closeness to primitive man and to animals may help to give to children a sense of the wholeness of life, of its unity.

The successful author for children must still trail some "clouds of glory" and be able to impart his enthusiasm, his delight in the world of sense and spirit to his readers. It cannot be a false enthusiasm. Children rarely can be fooled. They are honest themselves and expect honesty in return. They disdain condescension.

While I was working on *The Treasure of the Tortoise Islands* with Victor von Hagen, I realized the manuscript seemed condescending, but I could not put my finger on what caused it. It depressed me that I could not correct so obvious a fault, and I shipped the manuscript to our editor, Elizabeth Hamilton, in despair. I told her to do with it what she would. When the galleys and manuscript were returned, I wondered what she had done in the way of revision. To my surprise all she had done was wield a blue pencil. Carefully I noted how she had used it, and shortly the pattern emerged. In writing the story Mr. von Hagen and I had told what our characters thought, said and did. In each case Mrs. Hamilton had cut what they thought. What they said and did showed what they thought. The condescension had vanished. We had been guilty of telling our reader "more about penguins than he was interested in knowing."

What are the special requirements of fiction that is designed to capture the imagination of children? Identification is certainly one, but its manifestations may be extremely various. If the young reader needs to escape an intolerable situation, he may want heroes larger than life. One librarian in a school whose students were culturally deprived said they read fairy stories avidly. Here they could escape rejection and poverty, and be princesses or princes, and after dire adventures could live happily ever after.

On the other hand, the typical middleclass child, secure and well-cared-for, wants to read about children like himself. This is one reason Beverly

Cleary's books are so popular. The reader recognizes the characters as his friends. Mrs. Cleary also has the great gift of being able to write dialogue in the child's own vernacular without being slangy. It is far easier to write about some faraway time or place, for the young reader rarely can know how accurate it is. The modern child recognizes instantly the writer who is unsuccessfully trying to write about the present without an ear for the speech of the young.

Children need to believe in the essential goodness of life. That is the principal reason most children's stories have happy ends. Virtue is usually rewarded, evil punished. A good writer is subtle in devising the story and the rewards may not and should not always be material. It is the living that is important, and satisfactions are as various as the people having them.

Every child must meet pain, sorrow and frustration as well as joy. The idea that suffering must be avoided in books for the young seems to me to be false. I remember weeping over Andersen's "Little Mermaid" each time I read it. Although I did not realize it then, I was increasing my capacity for sympathy for the sorrows of others.

Fiction should widen the child's horizons, both mental and emotional. One little boy stopped his mother while she was reading him E. B. White's *Charlotte's Web*. "Mother," he said sadly, putting his hand on her arm to stop her reading, "you didn't cry when Charlotte died." Children do suffer, and are reassured to discover that they are not alone in their misery. Whatever the trials and tribulations faced by the hero, the story must end on an upbeat.

Another need is the satisfaction of curiosity. This is where the writer of non-fiction is at his best. Although they vary in complexity, depending on the age for which they are written, factual books must not be dull. Some may be so vivid that they can stimulate the reader to further exploration in some special field. Jean Henri Fabre's books on insects have led many a child into an interest in entomology.

Every child is a potential adventurer, and there is insatiable need for stories of action and suspense. No place is too far, no adventure too perilous; from the stars to the center of the earth a child's mind may range in books. The true "time machine" is a book—one can go back through the centuries or forward to the imagined future at will.

Writing for the elementary school child necessarily means that the author writes in a less complex style than he would if writing for older readers, though most of the same emotions are involved, and many of the same basic themes. Struggle is the essence of living, and children need to know how to struggle successfully and with the least harm to others.

When I was writing *Too Many Dogs,* I was trying to devise an ending that would be realistic and yet idealistic. The story concerns Hank, a ten-year-old boy, his two friends, and a fourth boy who wishes to join their gang, but who is disliked by them. I wanted some means of bringing them together, some way to make them begin to understand each other and learn to live peacefully together, if not to be close friends. For it has always seemed to me that "to understand all is to forgive all" may be true but it does not follow that understanding all will make you like all.

As someone once said regarding a friend's peculiarity, "I can understand it, but I can't stand it." I wanted to make my hero stand it. I spoke to a group of junior high school students while I was writing the story and asked for their advice. Although I received several suggestions, they were all trite. As I was leaving, a boy made the suggestion that Jasper, the unwanted boy, should break his leg and that Hank should rescue him. Then they would become friends. I thanked him for his idea, but thought it too melodramatic to use. It was not until the book had been in print for over two years that I realized the lad had given me my solution—in a different form, but basically the same idea.

The children's author not only must tell a good story, but he should also discuss children's actual problems in terms they can understand. Many writers are inclined to portray the parent-child relationship as too perfect. They never quarrel, or even disagree. It is difficult to write of the normal frictions of family life and not exaggerate them, but I believe children's books would be better if this problem were tackled more often.

Although it is obvious that the author must gear his work to his audience, there are a few things to be aware of when planning stories. Most children wish to read about characters somewhat older than themselves. A ten-year-old will read about children ten or older or about adults, but will scorn a story about a seven-year-old. That is the reason for the increased need for books with fairly adult interest-level but written in extremely simple language for the retarded reader. The whole make-up of the book must look older, though the text itself be easy to read. To do this creatively takes no little talent.

All of you know that at a certain age girls and boys diverge in their reading tastes. Boys never read books about girls primarily, but girls seem often to be as interested in high adventure as boys, and will read with relish books addressed to the male.

For many years there was a need for trade books for children just beginning to read. There were numerous books interesting to young readers, if read aloud to them, but much too difficult for them to read to themselves. There was literally nothing to offer a child who wanted to leave his readers and tackle a book of his own choice.

I was asked by parents time and again for this type of book. Finally, I decided to write one myself. Knowing nothing about writing for children in the technical sense, I had read enough to be critical of my own work. I took as my subject an incident from my own childhood that I had vividly remembered: moving from the city to the country, and getting caught in a snowstorm. I wrote in 1929 what I fondly believe to be the first of the "easy-reading" books so prevalent today.

The publishing business is as subject to fashion as the clothing industry. When "they are wearing" books about Latin America, we have a flood of them. When the market is saturated, no one can sell even an excellent book on the subject. The same is true of trying to get published a book that does not fit into the fad of the moment. It takes an unusual, astute, and brave publisher to launch something new.

In 1929 I was in New York, reading manuscripts for several publishers. I knew the few editors of children's books then in publishing. I had shown the manuscript to several editors. Only Louise Seaman, children's editor at Macmillan, had shown any interest. She liked it, but had to have the approval of the education department before she could accept it.

My hopes were raised and I mentally saw my book in book stores. Well, I might have known! The education department said that I did not have a name in education—something of which I was already aware. Also, they noted that they already had plenty of supplementary readers (truly beside the point, as I was not offering a supplementary reader). Besides, the education department added, they had noted that I had not used a word list.

This was my first introduction to word lists. I had never heard of them before. Dutifully I bought the one then in vogue and rapidly checked my story with the permitted vocabulary. Most of the words in *Who Wants an Apple?* were in the first 1500 words listed for the first three grades, but three words were not on the list. One was the word "cinnamon." I had noted the word "gingerbread" appeared, however. I tried—but did you ever try to find a synonym for "cinnamon?" Another word not in the list was "freckle." The words "spot," "on," "the," "face" were there, but I thought that spots on the face could as well be measles as freckles.

I am ashamed to admit that I substituted "soft-cooked' for "soft-boiled" egg.

The word list puzzled me. It seemed to me that "cinnamon" was much easier for a beginning reader to master than "gingerbread" with its silent letter. So I read the preface, and to my amusement I discovered it was drawn from existing primers.

Macmillan rejected my story, and although I sent it to publisher after publisher, no one would touch it. There was no market for such, they said. Years went by, and after digging it out of some other discarded manuscripts and on rereading it deciding it wasn't half bad, I sent it out again. Back it came, rejected once more.

It was not until after *The Treasure of the Tortoise Islands* was published that I dusted off *Who Wants an Apple?* and sent it to my editor. She, too, rejected it. I felt frustrated. Here I was, a book-seller, knowing the demand for such a book and not able to convince any publisher. I felt sure the story was good, as each time I read it I still liked it. After a story gets cold, if it is poor, a critical author will spot its weakness and either re-work it or discard it.

One day, Helen Gentry of Holiday House came to see me at the shop. I then told her how much we needed easy-to-read books. "I have even written one," I said, "but no one will publish it."

"Send it to me, will you?" Miss Gentry asked. I agreed, but when she had left I thought, "Why be foolish? I will only collect one more rejection." To my surprise, a month later Miss Gentry wrote asking me where was the manuscript I had promised to send her.

To be polite, I shipped it off, return-addressed, stamped envelope, and all. I received another letter almost immediately telling me she liked my idea, and would begin a series with my book. I was in a daze of pleasure, only slightly marred by the instructions for revision that accompanied the acceptance. The story was about 3500 words long and I had to cut it in two. I was also instructed to make no more than forty characters to a line, and exactly how many lines to each page. The idea of cutting my brain child in two daunted me, but as the editor said he would cut it if I did not, I started in feeling somewhat as if I were being made to sleep in Procrustes' bed.

The first part of the revision was comparatively easy as I had used a great deal of repetition. Out came the excess verbiage. The second part was more difficult. I pared my story to the bone. Each word was agonized over. Is this word necessary? I finally pared the story down to about 1800 words. To my surprise and pleasure, when I re-read the revision I discovered my story was tighter, better written, and more interesting than formerly.

Rewriting is an important part of writing, whether for children or adults. Somerset Maugham once said that when he first wrote a story he liked it a lot and no one else did. He then worked on it till he liked it less and others liked it better. When he had worked on it until he hated it, others liked it best. He said also that he realized this necessity for rewriting and that the more a writer's work sounded as if it had bubbled up naturally and was set down just as it came, the more you could be certain he had struggled long and hard to make it seem so. But, he said, in spite of knowing this, there was one story by Colette that he felt sure she had not rewritten—that it had just flowed from her pen without effort. He sat next to her at a dinner party one time and told her of his belief. She smiled at him and said, "I rewrote that story thirty times."

One of the great problems of writing very simply is a certain tendency to abruptness and a choppy rhythm. I read the text aloud again and again to improve the rhythm. Reading aloud always helps an author to spot roughness that spoils the easy flow of the story. I still treasure the letter from my editor, in which he says, "The book will occupy a particularly honored place in my library for the *lack* of editorial work spent on it—a rare pleasure, I assure you!"

Who Wants an Apple? was first published in 1942, some twelve years after I wrote it. Because it was published during the early part of the war, My story had an unexpected use. Several nursery school teachers told me that this simple story of a child moving from city to country, and her discovery that home was where your parents were, had consoled many children uprooted by the war, and uncertain where they belonged. It was lagniappe I still treasure.

After a story is written, it is often helpful for a children's author to have a child the right age read and comment on a manuscript. One friend who wrote a book for teenage girls asked my then thirteen-year-old niece to read it. She enjoyed it but said the climax had been resolved by an adult in the story and not by the heroine. It was a fault that had evaded the author, her editor, and me when we read it. Luckily the author had only to rewrite a small part, for subconsciously she had been building for the proper solution.

I was somewhat amused at the only comments made on my book *Mountain Courage* by the young son of an editor friend of mine. The boy apparently liked the book, for his father said he got up very early in the morning to finish it. The boy noted that I sometimes called my hero "Forry" and sometimes "Forrest." He said I should have Forrest's family call him by a nickname, but that the rest of the time I should use his whole name. Curiously, this question had slightly plagued me, but I had not figured it out for myself.

Comments and letters from children are part of the satisfaction an author gets for writing for them. One young man of twelve wrote me from Colorado that *Mountain Courage* was his favorite book. He had read it twice, once when he was ten and again when he was twelve. He said ever since he first read it, his family kept an eye on him when they went on picnics to be sure he would not get lost, like the hero of my book.

Some children are too restless and active to spend time reading. Others never learn to enjoy reading because of the paucity of books accessible to them. It is not that good books are not available. Each year sees the publication of more and more books for children. Librarians, teachers, parents and booksellers are deluged by a flood of children's books on every suitable subject. But a mere trickle of the flood reaches most places —stationery stores with their sideline of books chosen by people who do not know a good book for children when they see it; toy stores with a scattering of non-books—paint books, puzzle books, a few how-to-do-it books; department stores with their shelves and shelves of commercial series, written to order by a staff of hacks; and occasionally a real book shop where the discriminating buyer may find a good selection of the choicest books, both old and new for children.

Then there are the school and public libraries, both being starved for funds by indifferent supervisors. There are not enough librarians to go around, and far too few libraries to meet the needs of the increasing population. An administrator who is book-minded is the exception, and lucky the teacher who has one. One principal of an elementary school told me, smiling smugly, "I don't buy books regularly. I only buy them when we need them." He proudly showed me his "library"—two metal stacks filled with the dirtiest, oldest, shabbiest books I had ever seen. The children in that school were being starved intellectually.

I read recently a report of a recent study at Stanford University on what makes excellence in schools. The researchers discovered that it was not the amount of home work, or the number of guidance counsellors, but the number of books in the school library, the excellence and experience of the teachers, and the length of the school year.

Children are also cheated by indifferent parents. It is hard to make readers out of children who never see a book in the home. Children need home libraries in which they keep the books they read and reread. They need parents who read to them before they can read to themselves, and who know the value of books.

Teachers can do much to make children read and enjoy books they might not discover by themselves. By reading selected chapters aloud and then stopping at an especially exciting place, a teacher may stimulate children to finish on their own. Some books may be read aloud entirely. A good teacher can put over quite difficult material if she reads aloud well, and is herself interested in what she is reading. It is fatal to try to put over a book you dislike. Don't try it but get something you enjoy.

I had an amusing experience in respect to reading aloud and stopping at an exciting point. I had been talking about books to a group of third to sixth grade children in school and had read aloud from Kipling's *Jungle Book* the story of Mowgli and how he was adopted by the wolves. I reached the point when Mother Wolf defies Shere Khan, the tiger, when I put the book down.

"Go on, go on," the children chorused.

"I'm sorry, there isn't time," I said, "but I'm sure you will find a copy in your library if you want to know what happens next." I then left the room, and went up to the library to await the teacher whose guest I was. While standing there, I noticed five copies of *The Jungle Book* on the shelves. All five copies disappeared before the teacher arrived, and a waiting list was begun.

Jackie, the daughter of a colleague of mine, once remarked, "My mother wants me to read classics." I wish I could reproduce her tone of voice—it mingled pride in her mother's desire with her own determination not to read any.

"Do you know what a classic is?" I inquired.

This seemed to startle her a bit. "No," she said, "what is it?"

"Well," I said, "a classic is just a book that is so interesting that even if it happens to be a very old book—written many, many years ago, it is still read and enjoyed. When people stop reading it, it dies, and isn't a classic any longer."

"Is that what a classic is?" she said, "I didn't know that. I think I'd like to read a classic."

Secretly, I believe, every author hopes to write a classic. As Robert Louis Stevenson said in "If This Were Faith,"

Bright is the ring of words
  When the right man rings them.
Fair the fall of songs
  When the singer sings them.
Still they are carolled and said—
  On wings they are carried—
After the singer is dead
  And the maker buried.

DISCUSSION

DR. AUSTIN: Miss Hawkins made an excellent statement in saying that writing for children is a highly specialized gift and craft. Few if any authors practice on children in the hope of becoming able to write for adults, nor are children's writers those persons who have failed to create something of value for grownups. In fact, many writers are equally successful in the field of both juvenile and adult literature; for example, Rumer Godden, E. B. White, Esther Forbes, C. S. Lewis, Rudyard Kipling, Rachel Fields and literally dozens and dozens of others. Rumer Godden asserted that she found children's books more difficult to write than novels for adults and that she wrote juvenile books because they were good discipline for her.

Howard Pyle once said that he was glad that he had made literary friends of children, that stories read in childhood leave an indelible impression whereas in our mature years we forget the books we read. The authors of our childhood years gain a niche in the temple of memory; they create in us an image never to be cast out onto the rubbish heap of things outgrown and outmoded.

It may be a consolation to you, Miss Hawkins, to think of the parallel between your easy-to-read book and this year's Newbery award winner, *A Wrinkle in Time*. Someone has said that at least twenty editors rejected it before an editor decided to take a chance on an obviously superior book which would probably be a very, very difficult book to promote. How mistaken they were, however, because almost from the very beginning *A Wrinkle in Time* was greeted enthusiastically by children and librarians alike.

DR. BRACKEN: One of my favorite librarians, who has authored eleven children's books and teaches creative writing, told a group of prospective children's writers to expect to be met with the raised-eyebrow question: "Do you mean you're writing a *children's book?*" She counseled that they reply, "I probably have enough talent to write the great American novel or the great epic poem. I *hope* I have enough talent to write a children's book." She went on to say that literature has a place for both "juvies" and "adulties."

Perhaps we should mention some prerequisites for writing for children: (1)

A person must have something to say. (2) That something and its saying should be the most important thing in the world to that person. (3) He must be willing to work, work, work, work—to read all the high-quality children's books, to practice on saying well what he has to say, to learn to accept temporary defeat, to try and try again.

The influence of enthusiasm for reading shown by parents and teachers is incalculable. Parents should let their reading show; teachers need to share their reading with their students. One of my best literature teachers, in nine months, made not a single reading assignment; but she spent every period reading to us—fiction, drama, poetry. When the bell rang she calmly laid her book aside, and we dashed down the hall to the library so as to check out the book she had been reading. We made our own assignments because of the enthusiasm she instilled.

Dr. Anderson: Miss Hawkins' reference to children's primitive nature reminded me of the old cultural-epoch theory based on Darwin's theory that children progress through the successive experience of the race. While no longer used to guide curriculum planning, the theory is still reflected in children's books. It may be that each of us is somehow identified with the stream of human beings past and future. The Oriental sees this as man's feeling a part of all nature, a kinship with all living things rather than man's conquest of nature—a concept featured in the Western World.

I agree that fiction should widen a child's horizon, that realistic problems can be faced in children's books. In Laura Ingalls Wilder's *The Little House on the Prairie,* the family find that they have homesteaded on Indian land and, after a dramatic year, they put their few possessions into a wagon and start out again in retreat. Estes' *The Hundred Dresses,* the story of a little Polish girl, leaves the reader with many unanswered questions about the torment she felt as her classmates cruelly disdained and ridiculed her.

I fear that some juveniles are taking on a kind of sophistication. The author seems to be winking at an adult while telling a story to children. These actually are not suitable for child readers. They are "juvies" for adults.

Question: This question is addressed to both speakers. I got the idea that children's literature should reflect the notion of the rewards for good living, as expressed by Miss Hawkins. We want books to leave the hero on the upbeat This is a cruel, cruel world. Shouldn't our realistic books sometimes leave our hero counted out, unable to get off the floor?

Miss Hawkins: I don't think I said the hero should always win, but that he should have some rewards. These rewards are not necessarily material, and you can have rewards from failure, too. I remember that I learned from my failures. You are down for the count of ten as far as material reward is con-concerned; but you still get up off the ground later and face this complete defeat, then go on. A friend of my mother once said that the loss of hope is the worst of the respectable sins.

Dr. Arbuthnot: In young children because they have so many timidities and insecurities, we are busy building up their reassurance that they have an accepted and important place in the world and that things can be righted. In the myths read by older children—in contrast to the folk tale—the hero doesn't always succeed but he picks himself up. That, it seems to me, is the point in my title, "Dawn Wind Stirring,"—you may be flat on your face—and most of us have had the misfortune to fall flat on our faces, but we do have a feeling that the struggle has to go on, we have got to exert ourselves. That's my point.

Do you remember in Mrs. L'Engle's earlier book *Meet the Austins* how it begins with a death which the children considered completely unjust—an aviator uncle that they adored and who died in service? The mother takes those children to a mountain top, and they talk out their lament. As they sit under the stars, the mother says, "When things like this happen it is very hard to see not the finger of blind chance but the hand of God." They talk it out in quietness and finally, in calmness, know that death has to be accepted. To the children it is a form of defeat, but the mother is saying that in spite of the apparent defeat of achievements, the struggle was glorious.

Question: How do you go about seeing that the theme of a good book emerges without killing interest in the story?

Dr. Arbuthnot: I don't think you need to call it theme. In *Island of the Blue Dolphin,* there is a quietness, a loveliness. When you get through reading it, there is something of the girl's resignation, her absolute adjustment to life that comes through to the reader. Why was that girl able to be a normal human being? You need not call it theme, but just what was it in that girl that helped her to survive?

LOUISE T. VAN ORDEN

TEACHER, PLAYA DEL REY, CALIFORNIA

3. Striking the Spark

A Teacher Speaks

THE world of education is actually in rapid motion, moving in several directions simultaneously, up and down, to and fro, forward and backward, but we hope, having a definite forward trend. It is like the thoughtful remark made by a child looking at the ocean, "The water *is* a little nervous."

With the so-called "explosion in the classroom" how does one teacher go about teaching children creatively and, we hope, adequately? How does she develop a balanced reading program by a language experience approach to individualize the reading process?

There Is a Heritage in All Things

It is apparent that the insistence on precision and objectivity has resulted in the neglect of important phases of human behavior. In a self-contained classroom the personality factors have a great influence over the methods used and the outcomes achieved. Confidence and aspiration that can be developed in the children will give a plus factor, while emotional and autistic factors may direct or limit the search for solution, not only in problem solving, but in all areas of learning.

Exploring with brighter students the more intricate aspects of enjoying books and thereby learning subject matter, which will develop the child to capacity—while at the same time helping the slower students master the required skills—demands of the teacher that she shall, to the best of her ability, develop an organization for teaching of reading in *that* environment with *that* particular group of children. Call it a form of government if you wish.

First and foremost the teacher's emphasis must be placed in an environment that will produce interest in the printed word. How do I go about developing that environment which is ever changing and growing?

Know Your Children

Before seeing the children I set up a tentative grouping by reading the cumulative record and making a set of cards for noting eyes, handedness, home factors, special needs, recency of test data, speech and the like, tentatively forming three groups.

Later I will note regularly, impressions, interview data, peer relationships, work habits, highest interest area, talents, skills, parent opinions and similar data. It is surprising how little one really knows about any child at the beginning of a term. These cards give me data often necessary for recommending individual tests and clinic referrals, meeting specialized needs and preparing report cards. Some days I note on no card, other days on five.

Know Your Curriculum

The formal reading program is balanced, uses a language experience approach and prepares the child for individualized reading or self-selection. This program calls for one hour divided into three twenty-minute periods. Two groups work with skill texts, workbooks, supplementary literature texts and a library book. One group begins on the individualized reading program.

For the individualized program, individual cards or notebooks are used for each child. Abilities, interests, attitudes and work habits are noted. Children are seen by the teacher at regular intervals and followed closely. Evaluation of material read may be done with a single child or small group.

Our Los Angeles City School System realizes individualized reading has a great deal to offer in meeting individual needs, but likewise knows there are some unresolved problems as of now. Before a teacher can use the individualized reading program, the superintendent must approve the area. The assistant superintendent of the district then approves the principal and the school.

In our reading program we work for democratic planning and evaluation. Flexible ways of working together are necessary to insure maximum reading by all children with a minimum of writing when working in the skill texts.

The key to success is in children's knowing exactly what is expected so they can work to maximum efficiency with minimum directions. Current needs and values are identified for each child and each group to insure meaningful learning experiences and adequate levels of achievement.

No grouping is considered permanent. All children are grouped and regrouped according to needs. Some days communication or phonetic skills which are needed by the whole group are taught. Other days a specific group needing a particular skill will be grouped together. Phonics is a part of all teaching of reading, but it is not taught alone.

A check sheet is kept by the teacher to insure the teaching of all skills, phonetic and otherwise, to the groups involved. The intelligent use of teacher's manuals is deemed necessary for each set of the skills texts. The many word-attack skills of reading must be taught as a part of each directed reading lesson with follow-up work utilizing workbooks or teacher-prepared materials immediately following the teacher-directed lesson.

Reading skills are taught all through the day, regardless of subject area. In spelling we stress syllables; in arithmetic and all academic or non-academic subjects, we include all reading skills and language development needed to insure comprehension and development of critical thinking.

The teacher's challenge is to guide the gifted on to higher levels and depths in reading, and at the same time find books that are readable, authentic and mature for the slower readers. Familiarity with words in all curriculum areas increases the child's ability to express himself and to write. Children cannot write effectively without having and knowing words to write with.

All children should have the opportunity to explore subjects as deeply as their minds can probe. The teacher can't do this with thirty-six or forty-two children in a room without having a flexible program based on the best source of ideas, inspiration, ideals and enjoyment in learning: BOOKS!

Know Your Standards

The meaning of democracy is stressed during the first week while standards of work are being developed. Map reading and Christopher Columbus go well here. The children learn that democracy is not letting everyone have his choice. It is not the teacher's letting the child run the room. Democracy is a privilege. The teacher has decisions she makes and the child has too. Control by the students themselves is turned over gradually in areas where they prove capable. We come to understand why work habits are appropriate to the job, that work-type noise is necessary at times, that there are reasons why we get upset and try to find the cause.

During the first week, after making sure the child is oriented, I administer an Oral Reading Paragraph Test to ascertain his independent, instruction and frustration levels, and to note speed, whether fast, average, slow or very slow. The more capable children are thus identified for the individualized reading program. At intervals, I validate grouping by making a sociogram.

The teacher's tools must be organized too. I use four book cases. One contains science books organized on three levels of reading, with three different authors at each level. Besides this we have a research box containing all the Unitext Books and the *First Books*. These books are organized according to our course of study and filed under Plant, Animal, Earth, Outer Space, Machines and Energy. A second reseach box contains copies of the *Weekly Readers'* science sections and are likewise filed under the same categories by a child librarian. A new librarian for each area of books is chosen by the children weekly.

A second book case, the teacher's, is kept near at hand and contains a wide selection of poetry books and anthologies for all levels of readers. Sets of books for individualized reading and a supplementary selection of literature books for emergencies are kept in the same case.

A third book case is used for library books only. I have in the room at all times approximately 70 to 80 library books. In addition, the children draw books from the library. During the weekly library period we will learn how Dewey classifies books and consult the card catalog. Through its use each child acquires a book in which he is genuinely interested. Or, when time permits and as soon as the group is ready for work with indexes, I teach them to use the "Index of First Lines" in the poetry book.

The room library book case contains books marked in our own school library code and serves as a teaching laboratory: a star for the picture books and easy books, both fiction and non-fiction; a triangle for third and easy fourth grade reading levels, B for Biography and a circle for easy first and second grade level readers. Children learn how to file these books by categories as well as to find the group of books they like the best.

A fourth book case contains all the social studies books necessary for a complete research, reference multitext type of reading for problem solving. These books, too, will rotate according to need and level of readers. A rolling cart at our school is used by all the middle grades and contains a set of *Junior Encyclopedia Britannicas,* dictionaries and an atlas. Instruction in their use is given during the regular reading hour, during the social studies period, or for individual projects.

One problem I have as a teacher is to strike a happy medium between the old and the new, fact and imagination. I feel children need Andersen's and Grimm's *Tales, Arabian Nights,* as well as White's *Charlotte's Web,* Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows, Alice in Wonderland* and the various Newbery, Caldecott and Graphic Arts Award books.

I have sometimes used a "box approach." I place dividers, at the beginning of the year, using the Dewey Decimal System on the dividers. As the children read, write and create their own stories, I type them within twenty-four hours and mount them in a book. Small size manila folders are cut in half for the jackets. The child illustrates his book jacket if *he* desires and files it behind the proper classification. This box then becomes the "Author's Box" and children delight in reading the others' stories.

If the group is very slow and shows low interest level, I begin with the box containing book jackets from the various approved series as: *I Want to Be, Dolch, Let's Go,* and *Beginning to Read.* The children find the book jacket, then the book on the library shelf. Later dividers with the Dewey classification are put in the box, and the book jackets will be selected for books that are plain-colored and have no pictures on their bindings. So many children have said when discovering the picture jacket for a plain-covered book, "Say, I looked at that one before, but I didn't know it could be so good." What more pleasant way of discovering for one's self, "We can't always tell what's on the inside unless we look."

I believe that watching the children and *listening* to them, as well as seeing their ideas appear on paper, is another accurate cue for the teacher. When in the reading time we have been reading about a cat named Malta and a child brings a treasure, written at home, about "Molecule the Cat," you soon learn that Dad is a scientist and the child is interested in the same type of reading.

Many children are talented readers and talented handlers of books. I fully believe we do not use these children enough in many areas when working with books. However, there is a difference between talent and glibness; therefore when a child is talking about a book and another child catches him off base, I often say, "You have demonstrated you know much, but we will have to check to see if we think that remark is true about this book."

In 1956 one of the first Listening Centers was introduced in the Los Angeles schools. I demonstrated by using the record, *Noises in the City,* with a low group. The record was backed up with pictures and picture books for the children when they finished listening. (The upper two groups did research reading from books.) Verbalization from the lower group was outstanding both in content gained and in ideas clarified and generalized.

This early beginning is far different from the semi-automated Listening Center I have developed and for which I have just recently completed my kit, including teacher-prepared tape, books, pictures and film strips produced by Herbert M. Elkins Co., Tujunga, California. Now children learning *Reading Meaning into Maps through the Camera Lens* (3) can see a single filmstrip on rivers and lakes with the group and join in the discussion of it. Later they listen to the tape, looking at the strip again for reinforcement and added information and inspiration.

Many times during my teaching career I have felt that the children were not doing enough oral reading that had true value, interest, stimulation and meaning for them. This was partly due to lack of time. All this has been changed with the use of the tape recorder, and this use must be organized if the full potential of the tape recorder's daily use is to be realized. I have installed, with concealed wires under the desk, fourteen individual placements with head phones safely attached and tucked into open boxes in each desk. This arrangement allows me constant freedom of flexibility of materials.

Beginning at the first of the year, after all books have been distributed, each child has his own library book; and the tape recorder is in the closet on wheels with two microphones attached to a mini-mix and volume set on high. When the children see the recorder roll out of the closet, eyes light up. I explain the use of the head sets for listening to tapes. We then decide we will read orally from our new books. I call on one or two who know exactly what they want to read. They think they are practicing. Shortly I ask them to listen for a moment and then I play back the recording. The children are so surprised to hear themselves and immediately make pertinent evaluations. They have learned that one person talks at a time and we set up standards for when we talk and when we listen. Of course we decide we can record our own voice right in the reading circle and then listen to our voice on the head sets after. The reading hour has never been more quiet. These recordings also serve for constant self-evaluation and parents can be shown their child's difficulties as well as successes.

I oftentimes arrange for the chlidren to hear poetry during reading follow-up time. I select one poem that is particularly fitting, record it and then add a few of my own comments or read further selections of which the children can have copies with each line numbered. On the tape are directions for locating rhyming words and various interesting phrases. At other times I might tell something about poets and poetry. It never fails that some budding poet will go home one of the nights and bring back an original. I type it on a 5 x 8 card; the new poet records it. The card is then placed in our poetry box. Now we are truly artists and writers. The poetry box becomes crowded with teacher's pet verses and children's originals.

Humor or the sheer joy of living is another of my favorite jumping off spots for finding what children think of their homes and themselves and how mischievous they really are. I use LeSeig and Dr. Seuss books as a starter. *Anatole and the Cat, The Biggest Bear, Curious George* are other helpmates at this level. I continue with books such as *Homer Price, Henry Huggins, Lentil,* and *Henry Reed.*

There is a wealth of books about pets which have personalities and many humorous qualities. Third graders love horses and so I try with my better readers to use Marguerite Henry's *King of the Wind* to enlarge their concepts of books as story tellers, to find good and bad qualities of the characters, and to develop the concept of seeing history in the setting. The discussion periods are always stimulating.

That an individually planned and directed reading program using the language experience approach gets results is shown by the following instance. My class was to give the program for Washington's Birthday. In writing our thoughts down after much research and reading about George and his life, one of the lowest and most disturbed wrote:

> Billy is like George Washington.
> He is the best boy in the class.
> He can read a book.
> He likes to read books.

The only book he had read was a teacher-prepared story in a hard back. It took that extra mile on the teacher's part to slowly feed the reading materials he needed. Last spring, after two years, he passed the reading achievement test at grade level and dropped by to tell me to be sure to read those new books by Laura Ingalls Wilder to my class.

Know Your Parents

The greatest success in teaching the children to read comes with those who come from "reading families." If the parents and older brothers and sisters are readers, the student is more strongly motivated to keep up with the family and enjoy the same pleasures.

Learn the extent of books in the home. What kind are they? How many reference books are available?

In working with parents, I find that these persons first have to realize that poetry and science books have technical aspects, and they must begin where they are themselves. Releasing both groups from being ashamed to read children's books themselves, often aids in identifying books they can use to advantage with children; and at the same time they are strengthening their backgrounds and comprehension of the child's viewpoint.

Know Your Books

Just as children are individuals, so are books. There is no one best way to use them. My favorites I have used many times, in many different ways. *The Just So Stories* come first to my mind. I might read several selections during the language arts program to develop the concept of what is a funny book. How is it written; why did the writer do it that way? We discuss that all its stories are about animals, that characters have odd names, that this author has expressed himself differently. At other times if "curiosity" has caused difficulty in peer relationships, I might just use "The Elephant Child" emphasizing "insatiable curiosity."

Or, I note a child who is continually saying "I can't!" When the opportunity arises for a new book, I give him a copy from my special shelf —Polly Cameron's *"I Can't Said the Ant."* No words need to be exchanged, but the silent knowing bond it develops between the teacher and the child never fails. Also it excites the reader. Enthusiasm spreads, and we are off to the nonsense realm and other destinations.

In developing what is a fable and writing our own fables we use several editions of *Aesop's Fables*. Often the children's written fables are as charming as the originals.

My philosophy in selecting books rests on the basic belief that there is a book for a child and a child for that book. The child needs to choose wisely and the teacher must meet the challenge of seeing that children get the juvenile literature that is a portion of our heritage. Mediocre books are not used.

Know Your Library

As Dr. Samuel Johnson stated, "Knowledge is of two kinds. We know a subject ourselves or we know where we can find information about it." Teachers need to be instructed in basic library research in the field of children's literature. There is so much from which to choose.

Our Los Angeles School System is fortunate indeed to have an excellent library department and established school libraries. One of their publications, *Books to Enjoy* (2), contains a listing of 5,000 titles carefully read and evaluated by librarians, teachers and administrators. In my own copy I have noted, after the entries, if that listing is also recommended as supplementary reading in our basic California textbooks for my grade level. In cooperation with the local public librarian, I have all the book numbers used by that library for books not mentioned in the basic sets. This saves me hours of needless hunting. It makes it possible for me to write a quick note to the librarian for a special book, or its substitute, for a special child.

To illustrate: in studying Los Angeles we turn to museums. As an introduction to the nature of museums, I may use Freeman's *Norman the Doorman* or Dudley's *At the Museum.* It is excellent for museum background and discussion. After a museum trip, at which time the children do go through other rooms to reach their destination for study, further information about museums is desired. Questions arise about the many rooms in the museum. I then use *Treasures to See*. The purpose of a fine arts museum is explained, the teacher using examples that appeal to the children.

Another book, Glubock's *The Art of Ancient Egypt,* has excellent photographed art of ancient Egypt presented in an attractive layout. It tells how art helps us understand a people who lived long ago, and it also shows us how some of our ideas of what is beautiful came to be. Following along with this, the subject of who was the artist of the picture, I usually use Chandler's *Story Lives of Master Artists.* These stories will be recorded by me on the tape recorder and, where I have exceptional readers, I try to let a child also record one.

Although we have our own school library and the teacher does direct teaching of library skills during the one hour each week, I find it a great advantage to arrange for a visit to our public library. I know the librarian; she knows something about my children *before* we arrive; we all have library cards when leaving and have found a new friend.

If a bus is not available, the librarian comes to the school, does an excellent job of telling a good story and leaves the cards so we might all get our own library card. The children sense the mutual admiration of the teacher and the librarian. Over the years, at all grade levels, in five different schools, I have felt this was one of the strong links in introducing children to books and in their learning early how to get information. These early library experiences are valuable for children who come from non-reading families and lack any reference books other than the newspaper.

We also use a check sheet for each child with *Books Too Good to Miss* (1) listed with their library numbers. Each child has the individual list and checks off the books he has read. In addition, Story Hour Kits containing book, book jacket, picture, record, film strip or tape, lesson plans and follow-up activities are used in many schools in Los Angeles now. This way teachers have reading materials geared to the school's level.

Caution in making literature tapes is needed. The teacher should never tape any material that is not manifestly high quality. Too, if she has poor voice quality, she should team with other teachers to get her recording done.

Know Your Author and Publisher

This is another way of arousing wholesome interests. Children do have a curiosity for "Who wrote that?", "Did a lady or a man write it?" or "I think some authors like this one know what they are talking about."

Living writers or authors are best when we possibly can use them. If a "live author," as the children put it, can't come to school, it is nice to have the children write to him. Dr. Glenn Blough recently introduced his science books to two teams of children: seven and eight years old, and nine and ten years old, with their teachers. The usual questions were asked by the children. One child wanted to know "Why do all of your books come out with forty-eight pages?" Dr. Blough explained the technical aspects of large-sheet printing where sheets are cut into four equal pieces.

Know Your Book Dealers

Know your local book dealer in a specialized book store. So often in teaching and locating materials, there will be excellent books which normally will not appear on any list the school issues and will not be immediately available for school purchase and use. Here I use my own show money, or money earned by children on paper drives or other fund-raising projects.

In developing a demonstration of a phonetic lesson during the summer session, I secured a recording and stuffed animal characters from A. A. Milne's *The World of Pooh* and *The World of Christopher Robin* from a book dealer. At that time I had been reading daily from the books. The group first listened to the record via earphone, looked at the animals on the table and handled them if they wished. Had this teacher paid the purchase price for the materials used, they would have cost approximately sixty dollars. The time taken to make friends with a specialized book dealer was well worth the effort for both the teacher and the children.

My book dealer and I exchange many ideas on children, books and parents. For a P.T.A. program she spoke and furnished the new books. This is her hobby now that the business is well established.

Summary

As you see, my main concern has always been "Am I really teaching reading by using the best materials available? Do I provide a balanced reading program? What does the given program offer? What changes and ideas might more effectively meet the children's needs? Do I now offer a program with a beginning and an end, with all phases of it locked in inter-relationships? Or do I have only ideas not as closely adhered to as might be?"

The classroom teacher is under pressure to adopt programs, locate equipment, and join experiments in the name of progress. There is a place in the classroom for both the "tell-them" and "let-them-discover" methods. It is not the *how* to do it as much as the *why* you are doing it that all teachers should be concerned with. When we develop the *why* we do it and use both the "tell-them" and "let-them-discover" methods, a forward step will be taken.

There is truly no one set ideal way. Leaving room in all plans for new ideas will allow for both production and abandonment of basic beliefs and allow for genuine creativity. If the teacher is truly creative, she will adjust. Her main concern is not the school system itself, but the child and his tools.

Teaching of reading is more than teaching word recognition and being able to "parrot back" obvious reproduced ideas. It is more than getting thought from the printed page. It is more than merely teaching children to read for enjoyment. It isn't the home, school, school plant, administrators, librarians, teachers or any of the vehicles we use that make for a successful reading program. It is the children themselves, so eagerly learning, so thoroughly enjoying their task of growing up in today's world for tomorrow's future. May our set of ideals, goals, purposes and aims of today prepare them well in assuming their place in society.

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(*Note: Alphabetized listing of children's books appears in the appendix.*)

DISCUSSION

DR. AUSTIN: Mrs. Van Orden pointed out very well that the classroom teacher has a tremendous responsibility and challenge in introducing books to children. Obviously, the more she knows about her children, the better she can provide for their interests and abilities.

She pointed out, too, the need to provide better oral reading activities. In the second Harvard-Carnegie Reading Study we found that too many teachers use oral reading practices that discourage enjoyment and appreciation of books. There are so many legitimate, varied approaches to oral reading, for instance, the use of records and tape recordings.

It is highly important that teachers spend much time in helping children develop standards for choosing books. Admittedly it is hard to select good books; there is no magic formula that will help the teacher to know all the answers. Even so, we teachers can and should help children develop standards to guide their personal selections. One teacher worked this out by discussing with her pupils ideas about plot, characterization, treatment of theme, and point of view. Her pupils were helped to realize that they should ask themselves: "What is the author trying to do? How well is he doing it? How important is it? What is the value of this book? Will it appeal to other children?" By gradually introducing such questions, this teacher helped her children develop standards.

DR. BRACKEN: How very important it is that we give guidance toward having the pupils think about what the author is really saying, what "my reaction to this is." We in the remedial reading field know how often youngsters read superficially. They miss even the literal meaning, let alone complete interpretation, evaluation, and a deeply experienced relationship with a good author.

I like sometimes to have total group experiences with certain literary selections so that I know how youngsters are evaluating. Sometimes teachers are at fault when each child reads something different day in and day out, and there is no group interaction that leads to interpretation and evaluation.

Being a clinician, I would hope in learning to know your children you would consider results of standardized tests, physical records, inventories, and other objective measures. May I commend Mrs. Van Orden for her comment on the classroom teacher's going the extra mile to create materials appealing to a poor reader—an effective remedial technique too? Also, may I voice my approval of her remark that we must move in many directions—toward tapes, filmstrips and other audiovisual aids? There is an urgency to move from the handicraft age into the machine age, yet never neglecting the child as the center, where machines may serve in developing minimum skills.

Dr. Anderson: While the wealth of reading material in Mrs. Van Orden's classroom may not be typical, there are certainly few schools limited to a single series of readers. Here we need to be careful of comparisons with Russia, where I visited schools. Certainly a single series of Russian readers would have much less restricted vocabulary than ours. However, we must consider the vast vocabulary opportunity that our supplies of children's literature afford. I am sure that many American children have 2000-3000 words in their reading vocabulary at the end of second grade. Any comparison of our resources and those of another country must consider the limitation of total reading opportunities in those countries.

May I comment on an automated stage in the reading program? Something almost magical has appeared—a new device known as *built-in, orderly, organized knowledge*. Educators generally call it by its initials, BOOK. There are no wires, no electric circuit to break down. It is made entirely without mechanical parts to go wrong or need replacement. Anyone at all will find it fits comfortably into their hands.

Basically BOOK consists only of a large number of paper sheets, which may run to hundreds if BOOK covers a lengthy program of instruction. Each sheet is numbered in sequence and held firmly in place by a special locking device called the binding. Each sheet of paper presents information in the form of symbols which the reader absorbs optically from automatic registration on the brain. When one sheet has been assimilated, the finger turns it over, and further information is found on the reverse side.

No buttons need to be pressed to turn the page, to open or close BOOK, nor to start it working. BOOKs may be stored on handy shelves and, for easy reference, the program schedule is normally indicated on the back of the binding. Altogether the built-in, orderly, organized knowledge seems to have a great advantage with no drawbacks. We predict a great future for it.

Dr. Austin: May I go back to a point made a few moments ago about a child's reading vocabulary? In all seriousness I believe that nothing can hold back a child's vocabulary if we use the materials we have in the way in which they were intended to be used. Obviously I am speaking about the basal readers prevalent in the United States. These were devised and intended as instructional tools to help children develop the skills in learning to read. No reading program is complete, however, if this is the total part of it, because every reading program consists of not only the development of skills but also the development of special skills needed in reading in the content areas through a functional reading program as well as a recreational or a library reading program.

While we do continue to have controlled vocabulary in many of our reading materials, the purpose is to help children acquire a beginning reading vocabulary from which they can depart as they read trade books and delightful library books such as we are describing today.

Question: How many times do classes go on excursions per term in the speaker's school system?

Mrs. Van Orden: The average is for every teacher to have one trip per year. If there is a shortage of buses, each school is prorated. Rather than single classes going, we use high school buses and take double classes. We may take two library trips on the side.

WINIFRED C. LADLEY

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

4. The Right Book . . .

A Librarian Speaks

BRINGING children and books together is the principal aim and the greatest privilege of the children's librarian who has adopted as her own the motto of the Children's Services Division of the American Library Association: "The right book for the right child at the right time." As the years pass, however, constant repetition dulls the meaning, myriads of unrelated duties bring forgetfulness of basic purpose, and the phrase becomes merely a trite statement of the obvious, needing no thoughtful analysis.

Yet within the motto's eleven words lie hidden all the values and all the ways of bringing children and books together. Let us examine the phrase in its three-fold implication: first, *the right book*. By this is meant "the right reading experience." One child's reading-meat may be for another child a reading-poison so potent as to turn him against all reading. Frequently well-meaning adults honestly believe that if a child can be made somehow to read a particular book he will, by some magic, be made a better person. They, therefore, foist upon the young some favorite of their own, forgetting that the magic lies not in the book itself but in something that happens between the child and the book. In order that this magic may take place as often as possible for each child, *the right book* implies the availability of the widest diversity of books, ranging from the wildest fantasy to the most technical information and realism; from the books of enduring worth which require introduction, to current publications, many not distinguished in quality but reflecting present and temporary interests. There are as many different reading tastes and abilities among children as among adults and only the widest variety in a book collection can hope to supply *the right book* to meet the manifold reading needs of every child. Actually children must at times have access to adult materials.

Can we be assured of each child's securing *the right book* merely because a collection of great diversity is at hand? Virginia Haviland (5) has stated,

> Through making available those books which have proved to have lasting worth and selecting the best of the new, the librarian aims to enable the child to grow in knowledge and understanding, to develop his capacity to wonder, to find laughter, and to respond to beauty.

but does the mere availability of the book bring it to the child? The answer is, of course, "No." In addition to supplying the right books, there must be a deliberate effort to advise and guide reading. Book displays of all sorts, reading lists, reading clubs stressing always quality rather than quantity of reading done, notices of reading-related radio and television shows with provision for listening and viewing, use of book-related recordings and films, child-participation in book-reviewing and dramatizations, child-illustration of stories read—such reading-oriented activities have as their underlying purpose the introduction of children to the right books. But of all the mass methods of introducing children to books, storytelling, because of the joy it brings when stories are presented well, with enthusiasm, by a storyteller of personality, remains the most important, with the well-selected, well-developed, well-delivered book talk a close second. Needless to say, both these activities demand a broad and informed knowledge of the books themselves, a knowledge to be gained only by reading the books, not merely a thorough and thoughtful perusal of the reliable reviewing media; (12) although from a study of these, one might conceivably bring together an admirably adequate collection. Bringing the children to those books requires that we read them ourselves. How else can we find the story just right for our telling, the books just right for the book talk we plan to give?

In addition, we must be continually aware of our responsibility to build taste in reading. If children leave our guidance reading only that which they would have read anyway, we have failed. Adults can conceivably afford to waste some reading time on the trivial, the mediocre. Not so the child, for the period of childhood is so short—the years of great reading activity *as a child* being limited on an average to ages nine to fifteen—that he must make his reading count or forever miss many of childhood's book treasures.

In this connection, let us note the words of Graham Greene (4):

> Perhaps it is only in childhood that books have any deep influence on

> our lives. In later life we admire, we are entertained, we may modify some views we already hold, but we are more likely to find in books merely a confirmation of what is in our minds already. . . . But in childhood all books are books of divination, telling us about the future, and like the fortune teller who sees a long journey in the cards by death or water they influence the future.

In this attempt to supply always *the right book* we do not thereby turn all children into critical and omnivorous consumers of the best reading materials with a lifetime reading habit ineradicably established. History certainly proves the falsity of the proverb: "We needs must love the highest when we see it." Yet surely we are unlikely to love it if we never see it. Too often we have *not shown* the highest—we have failed in our basic task which is not to make of every child a reader but to give him the chance to become one.

In our use of storytelling we must begin with the children where they are; but we must take into consideration their potential power, realizing that usually the best story is the story somewhat beyond the child's reading ability, with qualities to stretch his mind and heart. This power of storytelling to create a desire for books of lasting worth, thus to help build bridges from present reading tastes to those of greater value, was well expressed by Elizabeth Nesbitt: (11)

> . . . librarians realized their peculiar province was to educate children in the art of reading, a thing quite different from the act of reading, or from the hunting down of informative facts. The art of reading consists of the ability to read the literature of power with such sympathy and insight, that one is thereby educated for living. Its purpose is not an acquisition of factual knowledge, but an appreciation of intangible, imperishable verities, of the enriching experiences which men have struggled through centuries to express in literature. . . . It is because storytelling presents literature to the child and then withdraws from the scene, that I believe it to be one of the best ways of shortening the road to the art of reading. . . . It is the unique function of the library storyteller to use it [storytelling] in order to create a desire for the book.

In like manner has Ruth Sawyer, (14) dean of living storytellers, in her great book on storytelling expressed her faith in the power of storytelling to bring children to books.

> Storytelling can be used both wisely and helpfully as an approach to books —old familiar books, too often forgotten, and new books, too often lost in the welter of each year's publication. It may be used more often than one

realizes to arouse the enthusiasms of the slow, the lazy, the indifferent reader—that boy or girl who would rather do almost anything else than read a book.

Ruth Sawyer's book and one of like worth by another master of the art, Marie Shedlock, (16) stress the fact that anyone willing to make the effort can learn to tell stories and that the way to achieve excellence in the art of storytelling is to tell stories. A useful handbook for beginners has been provided by Ruby Cundiff and Barbara Webb. (1)

Just as the storytelling method of bringing children and books together can be used only by those well versed in the field of children's books, so the book talk can be made effective only by those with a wide acquaintance with children's literature and its many titles. Proficiency in the use of the book talk can be achieved only by constant practice. A book talk is not a review. Children are not interested in hearing about the beauty of style that may distinguish the book in the adult reader's eyes—though it may be that very beauty which will endear the book to children, but of this they will probably be unconscious. Children want to know what the book is about, stated in a snappy capsule summary that stops before revealing some point of crucial importance. Telling is better than reading, in the book talk; and brief discussions of numerous books are better for the elementary age child as an incentive to reading than exhaustive delineations of only two or three. Complete knowledge of the material mentioned and a real desire to share with children something about which the speaker is deeply enthusiastic, will accomplish much.

Closely related to storytelling and the book talk is the time-honored and often abused custom of reading aloud. While a story told can be infinitely more effective than a story read, a story well read is infinitely preferable to a story poorly told; and some materials *should be* read rather than told, no matter how gifted the teller. The reader must be skilled, the material carefully selected, by one who knows thoroughly the wealth of distinguished material being produced today, if the reading is to be worth the time spent upon it. It is well to recall the anecdote so honestly if ruefully told by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, of the Christmas Eve when, after years of faithful reading aloud of Charles Dickens' "Christmas Carol," he realized that both his children and his grandchildren were bored by it. Reading aloud can do more harm than good if the materials read do not fit the listeners; but when material is appropriately selected, reading aloud can reveal new vistas of reading pleasure. For the slow reader, reading aloud may open wide doors otherwise forever closed to him, for his most important literary experience should come from listening to the reading aloud of complete stories, setting for him standards of feeling and imagination. Herein lies the most potent reason that an adult, reading to children, should abhor the trivial, the shoddy, the ephemeral.

Robert Lawson (8) recalls for us his long-remembered delight in a certain teacher and her practice of reading aloud.

> I cannot remember just what grade it was she taught, I think it was about the fourth . . . Although I have not the faintest recollection of what she looked like, I can still remember her low, mellow voice as she read to us.
>
> At that age school was a frightful bore for healthy young animals . . . In winter our shoes were always wet and our chilblains itched and burned. In spring it was even worse—school ran then until almost the end of June. The horse-chestnuts blooming outside the open windows, sounds and smells of spring, lilacs and apple blossoms, wandering bees, flower hawkers, and the peanut man's whistle all served to reduce us to a squirmy, scratching, unbearable aggregation of young hoodlums. When we became too awful, Miss Barrowes would sigh resignedly, take down a book, and read to us. She read us *The Prince and the Pauper,* which as she read it, I thought was the grandest book in the world. She gave us *Huckleberry Finn* and reams of poetry.
>
> These were the only moments of school that I didn't hate, and . . . I listened in an ecstatic, sleepy trance.

A further means of bringing *the right book* to the child lies in the work done for and with groups of adults working with children. The children's librarian gives talks to P.T.A. members, to church groups, to teachers and school administrators, to service clubs, to social workers, to Scout leaders and camp counsellors. She develops workshops on book selection, on storytelling; she gives guidance to individual parents and teachers; she assists in the planning of book-oriented programs for children, often serving on radio and television councils which provide a means for her to influence public opinion as to what the nature of such programs for children should be.

But what of *the right child* portion of our motto: "The right book for the right child at the right time?" How shall we focus our efforts on the individual? How shall we guide *the right child?* Harriet G. Long (10), writing of public library service to children in her *Rich the Treasure,* says that

> Mass methods can never be the best way to introduce anyone to literature . . . In the world of books children need a friend to meet them more than

> halfway, someone who will be able to create a desire to read and who will be able to supply the right book at the right time.

In this individual guidance as a means of bringing the child to the book, we must always focus on the child himself—his temperament, his tastes, his mentality, his stage of social development. Much of the resistance to books exhibited by some children may be attributed to our too-zealous habit of approaching a child with a book we feel he should like, merely because we once enjoyed it. *Winnie the Pooh* may fill us with delight, but the hard-headed young reader who finds it all foolishness has a right to his yawning inattention. If our efforts were centered on that child instead of on the book we love, we'd realize a how-to-do-it book to be more to his liking. Indeed, our insistence that nine-year-old Tommy is no reader at all because he doesn't seem to take to *Treasure Island* is based on a probably completely erroneous impression that we were devouring that tome with avidity when we were nine. We must realize that what we liked as children may be no more acceptable to the children of today than the clothing we wore as youngsters!

By focusing our attention on the individual child we will be able, too, to utilize our knowledge that age-level designations for books are generalities and inapplicable to a particular child. Our knowledge of his taste, his temperament, his degree of emotional and social maturity as well as his varied intellectual attainments in differing and specific areas have taught us that he is reading at one and the same time on several levels of ability. Though a child's interest in and knowledge of raccoons may make Sterling North's *Rascal, a Memoir of a Better Era* suitable reading, it does not therefore follow that he is ready for *Exodus.* He may grasp many of the intricacies of rocketry, guided by voluminous readings of ever-increasing difficulty, so that only adult fare on this subject satisfies; yet he may enjoy *The Matchlock Gun* rather than *Onion John, Rasmus and the Vagabond* rather than *Rifles for Watie.*

Surely the boy in Kenneth Grahame's *The Reluctant Dragon* had the right idea concerning his reading abilities lying on at least two levels of maturity.

> What the boy chiefly dabbled in was natural history and fairy tales, and he took them as they came, in a sandwichy sort of way, without making any distinctions; and really his course of reading strikes one as rather sensible.

We will also consider the content and concepts of the book of prime importance, structure and length of sentences a factor to be reckoned with, and vocabulary the least important of the three. Consulting vocabulary studies to make sure there are no words which the child at that age level is not supposed to know is especially useless when vocabulary lists are out of date, containing few such words as "astronaut" at any level, though such words are known to every school child in the United States today; and surely, the best book for any intelligent child is one somewhat beyond his comprehension though not with concepts or content unsuitable for his stage of maturity. If there are some words he does not know, he may be inspired to find out what they mean. If a nine-year-old never meets a ten-year-old's words, however can he be ready for ten-year-old fare?

The librarian working with children is especially conscious of the dangers inherent in this present custom of definitely classifying books as for children of specific ages. It does simplify for publishers their cataloguing and selling, and the booksellers love it because they can hire clerks who do not have to know how to read, as long as they can recognize the numbers on the jacket. They can thus slap out on the counter six or eight ten-year-old boy's books before the customer can say, "Parent-Teacher's Association." And the insidious custom of checking vocabulary and indicating "suitability" by so many colored dots on the covers of the book makes it unnecessary for an adult to glance between the covers; and poor Johnny will glance only and then, if he is an intelligent youngster, he will watch television and enjoy himself. As long as he is limited in his reading to books suggested by classification of age level and vocabulary, his reading will be very limited indeed.

In this bringing of children and books together, we must never lose sight of our responsibility to bring before children not only the books they want, but the books they don't know they want. No child can desire consciously that which he does not know exists. We, as adults concerned with wider horizons for the child in his reading endeavors, can judiciously see that his reading is a climb, continuously inspired by the sight of new summits: "Hills peep o'er hills and Alps on Alps arise." (14)

The child will be likely to become a reader aware of those "hills . . . o'er hills" only if he has been helped to find his purpose for reading. Interest is not enough. The boy interested in mathematics will not, therefore, necessarily read books about math. As a poor boy he may see little hope of higher education and enjoy reading about another such boy, Nathaniel Bowditch, in *Carry On, Mr. Bowditch*. He now has a purpose in reading. A girl may dream about owning a horse. She will not, therefore, necessarily read about horses. But if she encounters Phoebe Erickson's

Black Penny she may find that something within her is satisfied by that book about achieving horse ownership. She has a purpose in reading and is reading for meaning. Now this boy and this girl have a chance to become readers. As Dr. Leland Jacobs (7) has said:

> The real readers among children, not the word callers, are those who have learned to read for meanings. . . . Children want to get fresh and original meanings from what they read—not cute, not contrived, not precious, not crude, not falsely childlike, and, particularly, please, not sentimental. Children have to have valid meanings . . . books that will stand the test of experience. . . . When are we going to help children to face what they already know and face it not in some mean, crude way? . . .
>
> Children must have integrated meanings. . . . Integrated meanings have to form inside the individual himself. . . . Mary has been reading horse stories for six months. So what? No two horse stories are the same. . . . It could be horse plus geography, it could be horse plus a time in history, it could be horse plus a blind boy who needs help, a personal sort of problem thing. . . . Books which are integrated have a spirituality beyond the plot, beyond the line of print. . . .
>
> Children need to have imaginative meanings. A child reading a book with imaginative meanings finishes it knowing something he never knew before. . . . He is a bigger person, with a greater creative spirit, than he was before . . . —in the growing edges of the mind . . . by opening up the child's vision of the potential of life, factually, fictionally, or fancifully, so that life can be bigger than it was before.
>
> The child as a reader ought to get beautiful meanings. . . . The beauty of words fitly spoken! . . . A reader is a person who does not read words but meanings: fresh, original meanings, integrated meanings, imaginative meanings, beautiful meanings.

In bringing children and books together, we must be forever aware of the importance of those meanings, meanings that can be brought to children only by ***the right book for the right child.*** Certainly,

> It is not a simple task, this bringing children and books together. It means knowing children and knowing books so thoroughly that we may help the dreamer to see the wonder and romance of the world about him, and the matter-of-fact child to enter the realm of imaginative literature. (2)

What a blessed relief to remember that non-inculcating is one of the best ways of inculcating, as far as reading activities are concerned! Remembering this and laying out her varied wares, a rich display indeed, the librarian takes heart, especially when she recalls that children are extremely susceptible to a bit of personalized advertising. All the librarian must do in many instances is see that *the right child* gets the book in the first place. He'll sell it to his friends. Too much steering, too much adult pressure (silent is as bad as vocal) will defeat our purpose.

Having taken care of *the right book for the right child* part of our motto, can we then rest on our laurels and be content? No, for without thoughtful and informed consideration of *the right time,* those laurels would be practically non-existent. The interests and purposes of childhood are often ephemeral. The boy who wants a book on turtles so he can identify the creature he encountered on the way to school today, may gaze upon you with open disgust when you secure the book for him next week. Whatever made you think he's interested in turtles? The girl who this week seeks recipes for cookies representing the culinary styles of every far-away land, may next week be engrossed in sewing beads on her Indian costume. Children who want books, want them now.

The phrase *the right time* has other implications, however. Adults are continually bestowing gifts on children before they are ready for them. The two-year old boy gets the electric train father covets, the four-year old gets a doll house she can't appreciate before she's eight. Erector sets appear on the scene when simple blocks would be more appropriate. So it is with books. Aunt Sally presents a copy of her beloved *Little Women* to niece Jane, aged seven, and is hurt at its less-than-enthusiastic reception. Father is all but cured of any belief in heredity by nine-year-old-son Tom's total failure to appreciate *Kim.* Clifton Fadiman, (3) writing about "Books for Children," recognizes the importance of *the right time* when he recounts this experience with his son:

> When he was seven I tried the young barbarian on *The Wind in the Willows,* and he could make nothing of it. I tried him again a year later. He finished it with absorbed calm, clapped the book to, and said with finality, "Now that's what I call well-written."

Unfortunately, many children are not so fortunate in their experiences with "best books" tried too soon. The tragedy is that the average child, turned against a book by a too-early sampling of its content, never returns to that book when he has acquired the proper palate for it. *The right book* must be available at *the right time.* We know that children at particular stages in their development (not at all necessarily synonymous with specific ages) devour certain types of book fare. The trick is to have the best representatives of these types always on hand. This the librarian strives to do, for all children.

A Mary Gibson cartoon which appeared in the *New York Times Book Review* on March 26, 1944, amusingly high-lighted another facet of meaning in the *right time* portion of our motto. A beanie-capped boy of distressed mien queries the astonished librarian: "Is there a digest of these? What with music lessons, school and baseball I'm pretty rushed." No amount of zeal expended on bringing children and books together can be very effective if the children concerned have no time to read. It is not unusual to find every waking moment of a modern child's time scheduled so tightly that he barely makes it, despite mother and the station wagon at his beck and call, from basket ball practice to trumpet lesson to dinner to homework to bed. No wonder he wants a "digest." He has no time for being a child, let alone a reader!

The final implication of *the right time* may seem at first glance to deal more with place than time. Yet one cannot exist without the other. A child cannot read his *right book at the right time* unless he has a place in which to read it. For this reason have libraries for children been made as attractive as possible:

> Those light and gay rooms, decorated with flowers and suitable furniture; those rooms where children feel perfectly at ease, free to come and go; to hunt for a book in the catalogue, to find it on the shelves, to carry it to their armchair, and to plunge into the reading of it. They are better than a drawing room or a club. They are a home. (7)

Perhaps the only home the child has where real reading can be done! Not every child has a well-heated, well-lighted room of his own, where reading can be carried on in quiet, pleasant surroundings; and the living room with Dad watching the wrestling match, or the dining room table where a four-year old is busily and vocally coloring, are not the best spots in which to cultivate a taste for *The Men of Athens* or *The Bronze Bow*. But a book *begun* in school room or library and read until interest is established is more likely to be finished, no matter how adverse the conditions. Be sure we give the child the opportunity and the place to read it!

Surrounded as we are by the pressures of heavy work schedules, inadequate budgets, and increasing demands of our public for the trivial, the ephemeral, we must not lose sight of the inspiration our motto as children's librarians contains. We must not lose the vision of bringing children and books together in a happy relationship—a vision that can become reality only if we adopt as our own the credo so well expressed by Frances Clarke Sayers: (16)

> May nothing fall into his [the child's] hands that wastes his time, or robs him of his sense of wonder, or distorts his innate good taste. May what he reads feed that which is individual in him, and may he learn to make up his own mind about the books he reads; to discover the difference between real feeling and sentimentality; between honest excitement and violence for its own sake; between the drama of conflict inevitably resolved, and the contrived, unending action of melodrama; between real people and stereotypes in the pages of books. And may he find such companionship upon the road as he may need, when, like Boots in the fairy tale, he needs must cry out, "Lads, lads, look what I've found."

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(*Note: Alphabetized listing of children's books appears in the appendix.*)

Discussion

Dr. Austin: How I wish that all prospective teachers could have a course in children's literature and in "book talk!" In a period when nation-wide attention is being given to individualized reading, many teachers are leaving the entire selection of books to the pupil himself. I agree with Mrs. Ladley that this should not be done because, while he may know what he likes, he does not know what is available except as teachers, librarians and parents serve as guides. A study a few years ago found that 30 per cent of boys and girls all over the country would like to find good books to read but will pick up a popular magazine rather than go to a library for a book. So, as Mrs. Ladley pointed out, books must be immediately available.

A child wrote this letter to the *Saturday Evening Post*:

> Dear Sirs:
>
> I am about nine years of age. I wish that you would have an article that tells things for children to do, both inside and out. I know things to do, but I have done them all so often that I am tired of them. I would like to do something new.
>
> The Little Girl from Indiana

Boredom at the age of nine! This need not be if parents and teachers will help children realize the joys of reading.

Dr. Bracken: It is true that the more we know about a child, all of him, the better we can lead him to this right book. However, let's consider Bobby, a football ace, who did not list "football" on his interest inventory. When questioned, he responded, "Sure, I'm interested — in the fall!" Or, take the remedial case who spoke of interests in nature, in science, in biography, *et cetera,* but displayed not the slightest interest in reading any of the books along these lines that were brought in. Then one day she was found reading absorbedly a book which she tried to hide. It was a book on romance she had found somewhere. Let's be sure what children's *reading* interests really are, not what they superficially seem to be.

Dr. Nancy Larrick through her writings and chairmanship of the Developing Lifetime Reading Habits Committee has been working to establish more and more libraries of all kinds. This committee and ALA are giving us real opportunity to increase facilities.

I like a remark I heard recently. "The book a youngster needs at any given moment should be only four inches away, not four blocks or four miles."

Dr. Anderson: With respect to the right time for literature, John Stuart Mills tells how his father preferred the real to the imaginary, how he was learning Greek at the age of three. He goes on to say that at thirty he seemed to have nothing left to live for; he had great intellectual powers but insufficient powers to be a plain human being. Then he discovered Wordsworth's poetry—"medicine for my state of mind" in its "expression of feeling and thoughts colored by feeling under the excitement of beauty."

Sometimes children cannot read and write because of emotional disturbances. I present a thesis that the converse may be true: the nonreading child is suffering from inadequate development of his sensitivity, his capacities for thought and feeling. Our language must be acquired within the context of both its practical use and its imaginative use. We must aim to develop powers of imagination in every child. Sometime he should have felt deeply about a story so that such experience provided a sense of balance, enlargement of sympathy, and a grasp of values. The cultivation of these in this day of 30-minute episodes of TV excitement, the lurid headlines of our newspapers, and frozen dinners eaten alone is a challenge to those who seek the right book at the right time for children; and we need so many librarians trained to do this.

Question: In large cities where you have such an enormous and fluctuating public, do you have practical suggestions for deciding a child's background of reading needs without starting afresh each time he comes?

I couldn't answer your question in any short period of time. My concern this afternoon was that of a librarian's bringing books and children together. There are some librarians who because of overwork on technicalities in operating the libraries simply have not the time to become acquainted with the individual child. However, they should certainly have more time to become acquainted with individual books—in 1962, 2,584 new titles for children. Keep this in mind: if there is a good working relationship between a teacher and a librarian, you can more or less let the teacher concentrate on knowing the child, and she can tell the librarian some of the succinct and important factors about the child. In that way perhaps you can get the right current of communication between the right book and the right child.

Question: Does Dr. Anderson have a list of books for disturbed boys from eight to ten?

DR. ANDERSON: There is a good bibliography that helps identify books containing problems that might be discussed by disturbed children. Campbell and Hall, P.O. Box 350, in Boston publish it and keep it up to date pretty well. Let me say this: One advantage of such a book is that you can talk about the book character without the child feeling any guilt whatsoever. It helps him to get out of himself—to mirror his own behavior in a sensible way.

DR. LADLEY: Doesn't a late issue of *The Reading Teacher* have a fine article on bibliography with an excellent bibliography at the end?

DR. ANDERSON: Yes.

Mrs. Kenneth A. Learned

Past President, California PTA

5. That They May Live Abundantly

A Parent Speaks

THE child has come! The umbilical cord has been cut; the cleansing process accomplished; the first whiff of earthly air has been drawn into the tiny lungs and expelled in that once-heard, never-forgotten wail. Awed into a solemn and dedicatory exultation, the young parents bend over this small, scarlet and crumpled morsel. He is theirs; he is their first! They marvel at him, touching delicately: that beautifully shaped head . . . the smooth and milk-soft skin . . . those infinitesimal nails (actually finished-looking!) . . . the straight back . . . and so on, probably *ad nauseum* to bachelor uncles and maiden aunts, but oh so very real to those who have suddenly become the possessors of such an inheritance.

As they ponder over the new acquisition, they make fervid promises to themselves and each other: how very careful they will be! Only the freshest milk and water; the purest air; the best that knowledge and their means can buy in the way of food (vitamins, calories, basic sevens and all the rest); shots for this; injections for that; dentists, pediatricians, specialists, music teachers, gymnasts, coaches, dance instructors—they all flutter through the bemused minds of the owners of this vivid handful of noise. If the scrap is a girl, the new mother sees her pirouetting seriously across a lighted stage before an admiring audience, in a whirl of frothy ballet net. The father of a son visualises a brown and valiant figure—some seventeen years hence—dodging up the field with a football clutched under a viselike arm, with the stands going mad. College, too, of course! Dad's Alma Mater or mother's own university! The best is none too good.

But how about books? How about that heritage from the very birth-throes of our country? Are they to have no place in the life of the young person? Have we come so far from the days when a stripling backwoods lad could devour volumes of county statistics in his hunger for reading matter, or a bronzed and gaunt settler could point with ill-concealed pride to the few books that had been cosseted and cherished through trouble, travail and great want? Have the days of family reading around the huge center table, lighted and warmed by the big central lamp (kerosene yet!) become merely a nostalgic piece of ancient history? Have the sweet wild dreams and surging flow of imagination, born of printers' ink and a long long tale, been brought to a violent and untimely death by the flicker of the movie, by the miraculous exploits depicted on a television screen, by the grinding of the record player?

It is impossible to believe that such a condition could, or ever would, be so, as long as child-conscious and intelligent parents, dedicated librarians and wide-thinking teachers continue to exist. Even a seemingly dead fire may be blown, often, from still warm ashes and coals to a hot blaze; even a withered seedling may be coaxed into green life, with care. And, speaking of seeds, the ideal place for the planting of this particular brand of seed, is in the home, long before the child reaches school age, or is able to sign his own name and so become the proud owner of a library card. It is the early-planted seed that bears rich bloom. All of this is not to predict, however, that, neglected at home level, it may not be planted and nurtured later by the thoughtful hand of a teacher or librarian. It is merely that those very early years are so fertile, so receptive.

"But why," asks the young baseball-fan father . . . the bewildered and often overworked mother, "why is it necessary for the small child to learn to enjoy books? What will it give him that he cannot receive in his school lessons; in his after-school play?" Shall we list some vital reasons for them? There are many!

First, and this should probably be a double-star-red "first," the child who has never been given the chance to know out-of-school books, who has never squeezed under the gate into Mr. MacGregor's garden, never flown through the night sky with Peter and Wendy, never messed about in boats with Mole and Ratty, and never had the chance to chuckle over the delicious nonsense of the *Just-So* tales is an empty and deprived child. He has as surely missed an important and vital element of growth as if one of the needful essentials of bodily nourishment had been withheld from him.

Into all lives there comes at some time—and always inopportune—a period of enforced inaction, whether from illness, accident, sudden change of living conditions or old age. This could be a time of wistful restlessness; it often is. Loneliness and boredom take over. But the individual who has learned early in life to find enjoyment in books, has an insurance policy against all this. Your reader is seldom lonely; new faces, new worlds and old friends are only as far off as his own bookcase. And there is no age limitation. Someone once remarked that "A book is a memory that will be precious forty years from now," and so this form of insurance carries long-lasting dividends.

Another answer to the "Why?"—because at some time or another the child is going to become aware of substandard reading matter. We must face facts; it exists, we know that, and our children are well exposed to it. However, the child who has been in constant touch with the best in literature that is suitable for him, has unconsciously formed a kind of mental yardstick of good taste in reading; and although he may explore the substandard material, it will do little if any harm.

Next and fourth, acquiring information and breadth of vision as well as mind-stretching are included in the reasons for bringing children and books together! All books of worth carry many snippets of information that the child absorbs, often unconsciously, as he reads. Classroom teachers know and appreciate this fact. A retired elementary teacher from the West Coast once remarked, "We teachers know as soon as a child enters the classroom what that child's reading background—or lack of it—has been." Remembering that all of man—past, present and to be—and all of life in its larger sense, are included somewhere between the pages of books, one can readily understand the vast significance attached to the child's ability to enjoy books and to absorb what he is reading or hearing read, even though he has no actual sense of acquiring knowledge as he enjoys himself. This last, one feels, is most important! A child's pleasure reading should not be connected in his own mind with lessons or assignments. However, it is from this "pleasure reading" that a great deal of factual and general information is gleaned.

Many of life's problems—large ones, small ones—can be solved through the pages of an appropriate book. These can run the gamut from such simple questions as, "What can I do to amuse myself?" and "How can I make myself more attractive?" to deep philosophical or theological quandaries.

Do you ever think of books, that collection of printed sheets of paper, as an important means of family-shared fun and activity? They can be a most intriguing agent in welding families into an absorbed, relaxed and integrated unit.

Books at home add greatly to the child's reading readiness and achievement at school. Is it not fairly safe to say that if non-reading "Johnny" had been born of reading parents, if there had been books lying about the house on shelf and table (not locked away in a closed case for "looks") and if he himself had owned some well-chosen favorites of his very own, there would have been no need for the querulous question raised in *Why Johnny Can't Read.*

Last of the reasons to be listed here—again this one should be starred —children and books should be brought together in close and friendly companionship, under happy conditions, just because books are fun! Fun to read, fun to dream over, fun to discuss with family and friends!

Mary Ellen Chase, well-known writer and educator of New England, in a charming and tiny book (there is a particular delight about tiny books!) called *Recipe for a Magic Childhood* depicts a deliciously warm family scene. The setting is an old-fashioned kitchen in a small snowbound Maine village. The hustling young mother (Mary Ellen's own) lifts her little family, one by one, to the top of an old secretary, ties them securely with the length of a roller towel for safety, and then hands up their books for a morning of pleasure. There, warm and comfortable and out of the way of hot stove and hurrying feet, these children spend many a happy hour with the magic of books. Nor do the parents fail to share their enjoyment. When the clock strikes eleven, they are lifted down to share in mother's "respite" (one half hour) and to munch cookies and milk while she reads aloud to them. Father, returning at noon, finds time to question them about their reading, often with the promise of finishing some chosen book aloud to them that night. A perfect picture of a very real and lovable family, to whom books were an essential!

This brings us back, full circle, to the subject of books in the family; books as a connecting link between the varying ages; books to tie in with family fun; books as a beloved topic of conversation. Those of us who have sprung from a "reading family" and have bewitching memories of hours spent upon the knee of a well-loved member of the family, listening to the satisfying voice above would not trade that memory for all the jewels of the Crown. It is a treasure that carries on through life and into the generations to come!

So great a wealth, that, and yet so easily within the reach of every household! Family story hours may be started surprisingly early and continued as long as the family remains together. Once started, the habit seldom dies—that is, if it springs from the heart, and not merely a cold determination to read two chapters per day, or else!

Astute parents they are, who see the worth of such a habit, with all its ramifications and common bonds of interest, which stretch into all manner of delightful places and thoughts! Mealtime conversations take on a new animation when there are interesting books to discuss: the tale Sam found at the library . . . the collection mother is using for bedtime stories . . . the ideas sister gleaned from the volume she brought from school . . . the book of travel from which father can give such interesting little tidbits. These form pleasant subjects in which all can take part. What a delightful contrast to the "Tom-take-your-elbows-off-the-table; Patty, keep-your-mouth-shut-when-you-chew; Daddy, please-speak-to-Mike" routine which is all too often the conversational pattern of the dinner table.

And it is not always necessary to limit the discussion to the children's reading. In the average adult book there are characters, descriptions and events that are entirely suitable for young ears. This should be a give-and-take, with each member of the family feeling free to add his own portion. Besides, children should be occasionally given mental fare to which they must reach up, even if it necessitates stepping on tiptoe to do so.

These family discussions can form very close bonds between parents and their children, but there is more to it than that! The parents who have established good reading contacts with their young people have the advantage of possessing an indirect but completely workable method of guidance and control. Books teach lessons, and they teach them impersonally. For an example, an animated discussion of the merits and reasons for obedience, by way of the famous *Pinocchio,* or a round-table debate on kindness to animals via *Dr. Doolittle* or Brewton's *Under the Tent of the Sky,* have the merits of keeping Mother and Dad upon the same general plane as the youngsters, while eliminating the always sticky practice of "preaching."

Food fun too! Have you ever eaten a "Heidi" lunch? Well, perhaps not, but it is an intriguing way in which to promote the children's interest in certain books by carrying the tale into the kitchen, so to speak. For the Swiss mountain repast it is relatively simple to serve the milk in small bowls, accompanied by hunks of French bread and slices of toasted cheese. The children love it! Payne's "Hollow Tree" tales really belong to another generation, but can those of us who have read them ever forget that inimitable chapter in which Mr. Crow produces a delicious smelling supper out of chicken gravy and johnnie cake for his friends the Coon and the Possum? That, too, can be reproduced. An "Alice in Wonderland" tea, with the traditional white and brown bread and plum cake and cups of "cambric" tea, and there you are. Mother Goose is full of edible suggestions, if one forgets the "curds and whey" which could hardly appeal to the modern child; and many other books for children contain meal suggestions, including Claire Bishop's *Pancakes-Paris* and the delectable suppers of *Away Goes Sally* by Elizabeth Coatsworth. Stories of early settlers are full of Indian puddings, corncake, and fried apple rings. The very negligible amount of extra work involved in arranging such treats is amply repaid by shining eyes and amazingly good appetites, not to mention an amazing increase in book-interest.

Returning to the regular story-hour: at its best, it can become monotonous from time to time; voices get husky, tone becomes monotone, and a general restlessness sets in. This can happen in the most book-conscious family. Well, face it and try something new for a temporary change. How about reading aloud as a family unit? Not just Mother or Dad, but with the whole group taking turns. Once started, it can be fun for all, and there is a genuine warmth about this kind of sharing, whether it be carried on around the summer campfire or between the snugness of the home walls. Now, there are several ways of working this. Some carefully chosen tale (and remember, it must be acceptable to all) can be read in turn by everyone; but, as variety, how about making a dramatic presentation of the whole affair, with Mother and Dad reading the descriptive or explanatory passages, and the children each reading one or more of the character parts? The very small fry who cannot as yet read "like sister" will adore the chance to provide any sound effects when necessary. And, yes, some of the neighborhood children could be invited in to read with the family. Some most interesting neighborhood groups could easily arise out of this procedure. If possible, several copies of the book in use should be borrowed from the library or from friends.

One thing to remember! The choice of book for this type of reading, whether dramatic or not, must of necessity be different from that in which the adult reads alone. The general reading preferences and abilities of the participating children must be taken into consideration, and certain factors in the books themselves kept in mind. For instance, such books should contain the maximum of dialogue and the minimum of descriptive passages. Also, there should be plenty of action, comfortably read print, short chapters, some attractive illustrations, and a good thread of sustained interest with a carry-over quality. Examples of this type might include Alice Dalgliesh's *Bears on Hemlock Mountain,* Lorenzini's *Pinocchio,* Marguerite Henry's *Brighty of the Grand Canyon,* (the babies will love doing Brighty's bray!), *The Cat and Mrs. Carey* by Doris Gates, some of Lois Lenski's regional tales, Sarah Orne Jewett's *A White Heron: a Story of Maine* and books of similar ilk.

Oh, the ways of introducing children and books are many, and one could speak with animation and at great length of a host of new and old "recipes." For instance, the art of memorizing, which seems to belong to another generation. Why abandoned, if deftly handled, one asks? There could be a family contest in this. Also, there is the introduction of poetry—always to be read aloud by adults only, when done for younger readers, since the skill needed in the reading of verse can be hard going, and lead to discouragement and rejection. Even you, adults though you be, should have a private "dress rehearsal" if you are not used to the art! Nothing is worse than badly-read poetry.

However, perhaps the most fascinating book-introduction of all, the way in which the enjoyment of books can blend a whole family into an absorbed unit, is by following up the suggestions of the books themselves. From every book there are roads, fascinating little roads, leading off to fields and hills of new activities in which complete family or classroom groups can indulge together. But one must be alert to see and recognize these intriguing byways. Let us look at a few possibilities:

For instance, then, after reading Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House in the Big Woods,* why not try making a small log cabin out of dead twigs, chinked together with mud? Captivating! The truly ambitious can add a matchstick fence for the cow corral, and a semblance of the big dark woods Edmonds' *Matchlock Gun* can give the same impetus.

Alice Dalgliesh's *Courage of Sarah Noble* could be the inspiration for a few days of real camping in the backyard. Most yards are large enough to provide room for a tent, barbecue and an improvised larder. Or such green-thumb tales as Burnett's *Secret Garden,* Mabel Bennett's *Hidden Garden, Magic Maize* by the Buffs, or *The Poppy Seeds* by Clyde Bulla suggest experimentation with real seeds in a carefully prepared bed or box. And, could anyone possibly enjoy Barrie's *Peter and Wendy* to the fullest without attempting the construction of a little tree house, or digging a cave for the Lost Boys—complete, with a tiny room for Tinker Bell?

All children love the dear old and ever-new story of *Heidi;* add to that enjoyment by modeling a diorama of the Swiss mountain on a tin tray or slab of wood, complete with paths, blue lakes and Alpine flowers. Papier maché, painted when dry, paraffin tinted with melted blue crayola, bits of old colored candles will do it. See how easy? Doris Gates' *Blue Willow* and Govan's *The Delectable Mountain* are others in the diorama class.

A session with Kenneth Grahame's *Wind in the Willows*, and then what could be more appropriate than the construction of a long winding pond under a convenient faucet—complete with tiny wharfs, Rat's bankside dwelling, Toad's landing, and perhaps the island where the Piper played? The possibilities of this beguiling if drippy pastime are never ending! If the digging has been preceded by a reading of Holling C. Holling's *Paddle-to-the-Sea*, the pond could become a series of smaller bodies of water to suggest the Great Lakes, while penknives and balsa wood produce small canoes and replicas of Holling's little Indian passenger. Clyde Bulla's *Down the Mississippi* as background, and the whole becomes a winding river, with log rafts afloat; even *Treasure Island* or *Robinson Crusoe's* famous abode could come alive here.

Murals are not new, either to home or classroom, and with such background as scenes from Claire Bishop's *All Alone, Tales of Robin Hood*, or Ann Nolan Clark's *Secret of the Andes*, plus some sheets of newsprint fastened to the walls, here are work and play for hours on end.

Speaking of newsprint, shadow pictures made on paper fastened to the wall are a "natural" following the enjoyment of Stevenson's *Child's Garden of Verses*, and the whole family can emerge in silhouette. The verses in this beloved book are rich in other suggestions too, all the way from a home band to that famous "ship upon the stairs."

Geisel's *The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins* or *Thee, Hannah* by Marguerite De Angeli can pave the way for a gay and colorful evening of millinery, as the family constructs a variety of chapeaus out of scraps and bits, with the cutouts from an old flower catalog for trimmings. Mother will shine here, but who knows how much latent talent Dad's strong fingers may display!

From millinery to modeling! This can be only one easy step with birds, beasts and fish suggested by Wanda Gag's *Millions of Cats, Mr. Popper's Penguins* by Atwater, Robert McCloskey's *Make Way for Ducklings*, his newer *Burt Dow, Deep Water Man* with its delightful whales, Leo Politi's *Song of the Swallows* and Alice Dalgliesh's *Bears on Hemlock Mountain*, as well as all of Beatrix Potter's small masterpieces. Clay, soap, or the aforementioned paraffin, and there you are!

Fairy tales and legends lend themselves delightfully to the construction and working of puppets, either with or without a home-manufactured stage. A miniature Indian village is the result of reading such provocative material as Ann Nolan Clark's *In My Mother's House;* and Rumer Godden's charming *Miss Happiness and Miss Flower* leads inevitably to the construction of doll houses, foreign or domestic. And here, one must not forget the delights of constructing minikin figures—perhaps from the versatile and all-purpose pipe cleaners—after enjoying Mary Norton's *The Borrowers.*

We know of two small girls who spent one whole happy summer converting a fourteen-inch toy wagon into a miniature prairie schooner, complete with tiny bags of salt, flour and other early settler commodities after reading stories of the Western movement, such as *The Cabin Faced West* by Jean Fritz.

For an even slightly musical family, a book such as Elizabeth Janet Gray's *Adam of the Road* could open the door to evenings spent in composition of simple songs and homemade instruments. Helen Bauer's *California Missions* suggests models of the early missions themselves, and the ever-loved *Little Women* offers a wealth of try-it-yourselves, from the production of a family newspaper to a burst of home dramatics, in imitation of the four famous sisters.

And so on and on, in neverending and everwidening circles, so long as the bookshelves yield a full harvest and imaginations can swing and soar! This, incidentally, is also a wonderful way in which to tempt that group known as "reluctant readers!" And if the children themselves do not see all these colorful possibilities in their reading, what then? Why, the family expert tactfully plants the seed herself! It would not be the first time that mother has gently and oh-so-subtly insinuated her family into all the ramifications of an idea! Once the seed is sown, however, many years of shared fun and activities follow, and the results will be long and rich indeed.

"Ah but," one can hear the parents chorusing, "that is all very well, wonderful in fact, for children who already enjoy books, but—HOW DO YOU GET THEM STARTED?" A fair enough question, and practical. And yet, the "starting" is not so difficult really. In the first place, the magic words are "Start early." How early? Start with the children's parents, one would reply. There is no one so astute in imitation as the young child, and the habit of reading books is contagious in the extreme. So, be readers yourselves if you wish this for your children. Yes, yes, that old question of time! But—*one always finds time for the things one really likes to do!* Enjoy your books openly, discuss them, make it plain that here is something you consider to be of great value, great fun. Just do not become so engrossed in your own reading that the child feels left out, however.

Secondly, start early the habit of reading aloud. How early? The wise parent starts while the child is still crib-size, stooping over and gaily reciting the old loved nonsense verses and gentle lullabies from generations past. A few months later the child can sit on his mother's lap while she reads the same jingles and he helps to hold the book and turn the brightly colored pages with pudgy and awkward fingers. This will almost inevitably lead into the bedtime read-me-a-story hour! However, some mothers prefer to read to their children at other times, while they eat their lunch, for instance—and incidentally, this method can be a gold and silver magic for fussy eaters! But a regular reading hour gives the children a sense of having Mother or Dad completely to themselves for one period during the day, with no outside interruptions (and see that there is none). Again, a word of caution: let the general atmosphere of the reading time be one of relaxation, not an obviously determined one! In other words, this is something that is fun to do, let's share it!

Also the child may be rewarded for some special action or promptness by the reading of an extra portion of his book. In this vein, one might also say that the sick child gives the parent a wonderful chance! There is time for several short verses or a paragraph or two while thermometers are wiggling under pink tongues; and the reading of a chapter or two, or the quiet discussion of one already read, can while away many a weary or fretful hour. Remember, however, that books read to sick children should be of a quieter, less exciting type, and slightly younger in age level, than those one would read at normal times.

Books as Christmas or birthday gifts are a "must" for the book-lover, and can easily become so for those to whom reading is making its first tentative appeals. There is nothing like the ownership of books—a shelf or case "all my own"—to instill love and appreciation of them, and also to promote the custom of re-reading which leads to a very real friendship between the reader and his books. Subscriptions to the best of children's periodicals can be much the same; for the magazine, if thoughtfully chosen, serves a real need in a child's life.

Take the child to a good bookstore occasionally—here once more as an award of merit, perhaps—and have joint fun of looking over all the beautiful brand-new volumes, and possibly selecting one or two to buy. Remember that a book which is to become a family friend is not judged by its price; a really fine book engenders a sense of pride, and lasts for more than one generation of young people. All too often one hears the question, "What have you got for a dollar?" being asked of the sales-person in the children's department. A child should have the best possible, in text and format,—depending, of course, upon the parents' means—and a book that is to last and delight in far into the future is well worth its price.

Also, take the child to the public library, even before he is ready for that library card, and plan to spend an unhurried morning (even if it means leaving the living room undusted!) in leisurely browsing, with the help of the smiling person behind the desk. With perhaps the addition of an occasional lunch or soda with mother, these outings can become joyous treats, with books and fun and congenial companionship all thrown together in a happy heap.

Additional suggestions for parents of what is commonly known as "reluctant readers" include all of the above, naturally, as well as the fervent injunction to leave books—plenty of them—lying about the house. From the library get some that fit in with the child's own particular hobby of the moment or special enthusiasms; read them yourself and make a casual comment or two. A sudden ejaculation of "Why, how wonderful!" or "I didn't know that!" to the other adult member of the household, can easily arouse, first curiosity, then interest, possibly a real chain reaction! Another trick is to read a page or so aloud, and then stop at the most exciting point, and of course leave the book lying about in a conspicuous place. All this is to be done in a most offhand manner, naturally. Our incentive, always, is to have children and books flow together under the most relaxed and joyous conditions; reading is a happy pastime.

So, here it is—parent, teacher! We have at our fingertips, and for the asking, a source of joy and fun, of deep enrichment and solace for our children, that may become an addition—an important one—to the many other facets and enjoyments of their bustling lives. The gates are open; the vistas stretch wide and never-ending, from the softened rainbow tints of the past into the unrevealing mists of the future. Shall we lead them gently and gaily through?

(*Note: Alphabetized listing of children's books appears in the appendix.*)

DISCUSSION

Dr. Anderson: Let me add Sidney Harris' views to Mrs. Learned's presentation. He says that no book is easier to write than a child's book, and nothing harder than to write well. Of the thousands written, most are full of indigestible goodie-goodies and written by women who make admirable wives and mothers and sweethearts, but terrible authors of children's books. Harris goes on to explain that women mature in more ways than men whose relative immaturity enables them to achieve literary rapport with children. "If a woman had written *Alice in Wonderland,* the white rabbit would have washed Alice's face. And if Hugh Lofting's sister had written the Dr. Dolittle books, she would have called him 'Dr. Do More.' "

DR. BRACKEN: In addition to the delightful, practical reactions that Mrs. Learned suggested, I'd like to tell of one mother who, during summer vacation, went to the library and procured 15 to 20 books every Saturday for her preschool children. During siesta time, they had a reading period as they lounged under air conditioning. As the children grew older, they helped to select the books each week. Too, may I mention a mother who served a Sunday morning breakfast of green eggs and ham *a la Seuss?*

DR. AUSTIN: Households like the one suggested by Mrs. Learned would produce a whole new generation of happy readers. The parents who are not here today will have an opportunity to read her paper when it appears in our bulletin. Let's hope they do!

Teachers and parents can become partners in such enterprises. One teacher whose class had undertaken a unit on Africa sent a list of adult books about Africa home so that parents and children could talk of what is happening and what has happened in the past.

However, we still have parents who are skeptics and who ask why children's literature should be included at all in the modern elementary curriculum. The whole plea seems to be for more science and how, they ask, can we afford to have literature in the overcrowded program. Mathematics, science, foreign language they support, but wonder if literature isn't a kind of adornment.

We answer them: Children need wonder in their lives, and teachers have a far greater responsibility than just to impart learning. We need more leaders with vision, imagination, sensitivity; and cramming children's heads with facts will not produce such leaders. More helpful will be our efforts to encourage the beginnings of wisdom, and literature does plant seeds for the growth of wisdom.

This is the way in which literature teaches. The poet combines both thought and feeling to capture for us an experience in words. The child feels pleasure in finding the perfect expression for his thoughts and feelings, and he gains understanding by hearing these familiar experiences crystallized in words.

Our beloved Robert Frost once said that a poem begins in delight and ends in wisdom. How fortunate we are that the whole field of children's literature has expanded so rapidly and excitingly in the past fifty years. Children, under our guidance, have so many, many books from which to choose.

ROBERT J. BONE

ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

6. The School's Influence

An Elementary Principal Speaks

CHILDREN'S books are printed and read in greater quantities today than ever before, and many of the modern books are interesting, broad in scope, well illustrated and skillfully written for various age levels. This in no way detracts from children's classics, for, by definition, these will endure forever in the hearts of children.

Because of this variety of published materials the classroom teacher has unlimited opportunities to develop not only her pupils' reading abilities but to help children explore the unknown and unfamiliar, to extend experiences, to probe and investigate human nature and to open new horizons. This plethora also implies certain added responsibilities. Books may be written for children, but they are selected by teachers. It is, therefore, essential that school people with responsibility and authority for selection increase their background.

It is in the areas of human relationships that reading becomes alive and real. Reading and books become the child's vehicle to new worlds, ideas, understanding and interests. Vicarious experiences in books can give to a boy a view of his world he can get nowhere else and in no other way—television notwithstanding.

What then are the components of a reading program that will help children make use of the many-splendored world of books? What are some of the methods and practical experiences developed in sound theory and refined in the field? In what areas and ways can the school principal abet and lead in reading and literature?

Any reading program succeeds not only in direct proportion to the teachers' abilities but also to the time, interest, enthusiasm and leadership of the principal. Without the principal's support, interest, contact and direction, the best programs and ideas can wither and die. For these reasons, it is imperative that the school principal have evolved and formulated what he believes to be the objectives and scope of the reading program. In the light of his formulation, the program can be narrow, stillborn and sterile or broad, alive and productive.

Basic Reading Instruction

Basic instruction obviously is the heart of the reading program; hence there is little excuse for one that is not solidly based and well-directed. Research and experience consistently reaffirm that sound, well-rounded techniques and methods employed by skillful teachers produce results that exceed any of the ephemeral panaceas that cross the reading horizons like apparitions in a haunted house. The principal must be conversant with sound reading techniques and acquainted with the professionally written teachers' manuals and educational publications. The teacher must have confidence that the principal can offer sound advice and aid.

Teacher Training

As a principal, I cannot speak or write on reading, whether it be literature, book selection, or basic readers—at least in California—without a comment on teacher training. We, in this state, are in the midst of a credentialing revolution. Credentialing and training are so intimately married to the total reading program in the elementary school that any changes are dramatically reflected in the instructional program and the job responsibilities of the principal.

I would not advocate anything less than having an "educated person" entrusted with classroom responsibilities. However, I am concerned that we have become so enamored with the hard-core academics that being intellectually and practically equipped and trained to perform the art of teaching has become disrespectable. I submit that it is no more nonacademic for a teacher to know how to teach reading, diagnose reading problems, suggest remedies and refine abilities than it is for the medical doctor to know how to diagnose appendicitis and to remove an appendix. As a principal, I am concerned for the pupils of the future first grade teacher who has a major in archeology, a minor in botany, and two units in reading.

All that is required in the professional area is 180 clock hours (about one hour a day for a school year or less than half of the state cosmotology requirements) and TWELVE SEMESTER HOURS at course work that must include the following:

1. The sociological or the historical or the philosophical foundations of

education or any combination thereof.

2. The psychological foundations of education.

3. Curriculum and instructional procedures and materials used in teaching in the elementary schools.

This means one or possibly two units of work in reading—maybe NONE. Contrast the recommendations in *The Torchlighters!* Who is responsible for this professionally degrading situation I can speculate; who will be its victims I know.

Literature and Storytime

There is no better way to introduce children to the world of books than by telling stories and reading to them. Storytelling is probably one of man's oldest and most universal forms of entertainment. Millions of people —old and young, past and present—have lived vicariously from the words of others. Books have recorded these words so they are not lost to posterity and can be enjoyed again and again. Almost without exception, the most worn books on the shelves are those the teacher has already read to the class.

There should be a period every day when stories are read to the pupils. With deliberate planning, titles can be brought in on certain subjects, problems or interests. They can serve as the opening for discussions, role playing, illustrations and problem solving. Children who are otherwise indifferent to books will sit enrapt for the entire time a teacher reads and will wait anxiously for the next day when the book again comes to life in the teacher's hands.

Children may be familiar with the type of books they like and yet may be equally unaware of many actual books of this type. The teacher can expand this literary ken with appropriate selections. Any book at story time read in any way is not good enough. The selections must be broad, purposeful and appropriate, and the presentations animated and enticing.

Library—Student Use and Instruction

I cannot speak strongly enough for elementary school libraries. Every elementary school should include a fully stocked library with adequate funds for new titles and replacements. School libraries offer the elementary school faculty and students more educational opportunities than almost any other unit of the school. A centrally located, adequately staffed district depository has unquestionable advantages—mainly related to economics— but it cannot perform the service of the on-site library.

School libraries are as varied as the schools and districts in which they are located. Programs can be planned for the use of the library—regardless of its design—that will allow it to perform a function that is greater than housing books. If the school is privileged enough to have a separate library—even without a librarian—the teachers should take the entire class to the library for both instruction and library reading.

With a minimum of programming difficulties, the library can be used on an exchange basis. One teacher—preferably one trained in library science skills—can handle classes for the library while another upper grade teacher may instruct in music, physical education, science, or another subject of a specialized nature. These classes should have formal instruction on using card catalogues, locating books and selecting material, but they also should be the center of discussions, story telling and other activities that bring children and books together.

If the room that is used for the library is either separate or large enough, small groups of primary grade children should go to the library, select their own books and thus develop the library habit. Children in upper reading groups in the third grade should be allowed—with guidance—to use the general section of the library and not be restricted to the primary section. Guidance and direction in this activity should be provided cooperatively by the classroom teacher and the school librarian, so as to bring children to books on subjects they ordinarily would by-pass.

Resource Center

As a resource center, the library is of inestimable value. Classroom instruction can be enhanced and broadened when the full library facilities are employed. Picture files, prints, reference books and related reading material that are housed in the library can be drawn upon by the classroom teacher. In addition, if there is a school librarian, she can be kept informed on current classroom activities by consulting her colleagues and by self-enterprise and thereby help (covertly or overtly) the children select reading materials that will extend their classroom experiences. I would add, however, that a library and a curriculum material center should not be confused. Some sources would advocate including, in the library, audio-visual equipment and materials (other than study prints and source files) —a practice, in my opinion, beyond the scope of the library's function as a total reading center.

Book Selection and Familiarity

Bringing children and books together in a wholesome, productive manner requires that a teacher be familiar with the books. For the reluctant reader, there is probably nothing so important as generating his desire to know what is in a book. Under most conditions, he is not going to be eagerly receptive. "This is a book about horses," or "What do you like to do?" are hackneyed if not totally useless remarks. The teacher must know the books in her room, must be familiar with the stories—tell parts of them, read parts of them, discuss parts of them and know how to generate interest.

The quantity of books in the specialized field of children's literature available today approaches infinity. Because there is not enough time for the children to read all the meritorious titles published each year, there is little excuse for the multitude of inferior and tawdry books offered to children through librarians or even teachers.

The books purchased for the library should reflect the desires and needs of literature-oriented classroom teachers. They should be encouraged to view displays, make suggestions, state needs, read reviews and evaluations like those in *The Horn Book, The School Library Journal,* and *The Wilson Library Bulletin,* and thus familiarize themselves with as many titles as possible. Ideally the teacher would read each title but it must be remembered that there is a terminal point to the time and effort available.

When a new group of books is made available for children, the teacher should be able to comment on most of the titles. These comments should be brief, but specific and inviting, reflective of her knowledge of the stories involved.

Reading Activities and Experiences

Theme reading. Probably one of the most exciting types of reading activities is "Theme Reading," a practice which can follow many different avenues and spread into many subject areas. To be really effective, because of the scope of this type of program, the teacher must have access to a large selection of books and should often solicit help from a librarian. In a theme-centered program, a central depository may be advantageous to a school system.

Once a theme is determined, various methods may be employed to initiate it and stimulate interest. Untitled pictures may be shown to the class and discussions held involving the characters, happenings, and consequences of the actions of the people. Following this, excerpts of a chapter can be read from one of the books to be introduced. The chapter "Father Speaks" in *Caddie Woodlawn* can be used very effectively, for example, in developing a theme on family relationships. A discussion period, initiated by open-end questions, should follow the reading. Evaluations and opinions of various kinds should be encouraged. Before the interest flags, a typing-together process is necessary. Following this, the class is guided toward a statement of the theme.

At this time, a crucial point in the program is reached—the actual selection of theme-reflective books by the children. Having surveyed these books, the teacher is able to discuss, briefly but interestingly and authoritatively, their contents. Selection and participation should be left to the individual pupil—this is the real test of the motivational period.

After several reading periods, story characters can be discussed as real people. Their activities in the books can be related to real-life situations—for example, types of and reasons for punishment, responsibilities of individual family members and the role or position of the father and mother. As the reading continues, other related topics can be introduced—restrictions and expectations of the family, outside pressures of peers, jobs and conflicting interests. Open-end questions, role playing, and panel discussion groups are methods of evaluation and means of getting leads to further topics.

Relating the theme to other areas of the curriculum can be accomplished with a little planning. For example, viewing of social studies films such as those produced by United Worlds Films provides the class with opportunities to see other families—possibly much different than their own—in action. Relating films to what has been read facilitates a complementary action that provides better results than either can by itself.

Additional topics can be formulated either by the teacher or the class though the teacher usually initiates discussion, since "Theme Reading" is a technique that requires planning and careful book selection. Typical themes might be derived in terms of childhood fears, relationships with peers, differences among peoples, civic and personal responsibilities, and other human relationships. Unquestionably, "Theme Reading" can be based on subject areas or topics, but I think it has unique value in the fields of human and personal relations.

Reading wheel. Many children are inclined to read in a single limited area. Animal, particularly horse and dog, stories are universally popular. Some children will read avidly—almost without respite. It is true that there is great variety within this area, but I wish to re-emphasize the idea that children cannot like what they do not know.

To encourage broadening and extending reading experiences, the Reading Wheel is particularly effective. While it can aid in teaching the Dewey Decimal System, its greatest value lies in helping the child explore various areas in a conscious and directive manner. Also, the teacher can quickly check the reading habits and experiences of the pupils. The spokes of the wheel can be as numerous and diversified as the facilities permit.

Reading excursions. Books, as no other media, expand children's world of understanding and foster an empathetic nature. The watery eyes that accompany the reading of *Charlotte's Web* or Rentu's death on *The Island of the Blue Dolphins* or the sheer fun of Homer Price's experience with a doughnut machine are classic examples of empathy children have for the characters in their books.

Reading excursions are similar to Theme Reading except they involve planned reading-tours of the world. These are tailored to individual desires, but the books are selected for the characters and situations to help build understanding for people of different customs and traditions. Open discussions, comparative studies and exploration of human goals and desires are appropriate types of activities. Children can be encouraged to tell of their journeys, to speak of other "people" they met, to compare notes with fellow excursioners, to show films of their trips and generally to play the role of "Mr. Bon Voyage."

Discussion groups, book clubs, and book reports. Next to the personal joy of reading, telling others of books gives the greatest satisfaction. On the contrary, there is nothing so devastating as formalized book reports—especially written ones. A child's interest in reading tends to be destroyed by compulsory reports on "The most interesting part of the story" or "Why I liked this book." To create an atmosphere of sheer boredom, the teacher has only to schedule two or three five-minute book reports to be read to the class.

However, critical thinking, character evaluations, plot examinations and further pupil readings can be stimulated in other ways. Discussion groups can probe and debate the merits of a book; the teacher can read a story and encourage pupils to discuss its plot, characterizations or the author's style. This type of activity calls for thinking in depth, and the pupils are usually slow in maturing in such techniques. Once they do, discussion is stimulating experience.

Book clubs, of one type or the other, are almost as old as books themselves. Probably most effective in bringing children and books together is the kind patterned after adult clubs—specifically one where children bring a book (school or personal) to the club to "share or trade" with others. Three basic things occur in this activity: (1) each contributing child makes a "jacket presentation" of the book he has brought; (2) those having read a title in common discuss it; and (3) the teacher may present a new title in the school library and suggest books that are similar to those discussed at the club meeting. This activity has the advantages of being suited to a small group within a class, being part of the regular reading program or an entirely separate activity, and lending itself to all grade levels.

Previously I have pointed out ways that demand critical thinking which far surpass those ordinarily required by most elementary pupils' reports. However, in the basic reading program, skills in reporting books are taught as summaries and story evaluations are written, themes and topics are discussed, and simple bibliographic techniques are taught. For written reactions, actual book report formats (there are as many types as there are teachers) can be developed through using selected stories in the basic reader. Later, a specific book can be the subject of a written book report which applies the skills under instruction. This then is the critical difference—a book is read for the purpose of reviewing it and developing the skills involved, or it is read because it was chosen voluntarily by the pupil for reasons of his own.

General activities. Infinite is the number of productive methods and techniques in helping children and books become closer friends. Two worth mentioning because they bring out the personal appeal of books are: (1) correspondence with authors and (2) dramatizations based on books or stories.

The run on *The Island of the Blue Dolphins* after Scott O'Dell had answered the children's letter was not unlike the stock market activity in 1929. This book, of course, is a perennial favorite, but it now stands among the top few in this library's popularity list.

Stories of all types have sections that lend themselves to dramatization. Too often this activity is limited to social studies as a culminating experience. Excellent but simple plays can be produced by the pupils in other areas, however. Adaptations of classics like *The Christmas Carol* or *The Blue Willow* are standards, but stories that give meaning to the human virtues of loyalty, integrity, and honesty as well as those which require children to gain knowledge in unfamiliar areas should be included in the repertory of student productions.

The Principal's Role—A Summary

In each aspect of the program for bringing children and books together, the principal has his role and responsibilities. In each case, these fall into categories similar to those that prevail in the total school operation.

In the instructional reading program, he must be the educational leader, the supervisor and the coordinator. He must be familiar with his school district's policies and have a clear understanding of the instructional needs of his school's faculty and pupils.

The principal, too, must be aware of the training and background of his faculty, especially as credential requirements of new teachers change. He must work with teachers to help them improve their academic and instructional competencies. Those who know little of reading are going to bring very few books and children together—teaching them to read will be difficult enough. Professional growth is always necessary, and the principal's evaluation of personal and school needs should have considerable influence on a teacher's plans for in-service improvement.

A principal who abdicates his role in helping to decide on book selection is as remiss as one who fails to consider teacher opinions and desires. In the actual selection, the principal has two main functions: (1) to give leadership and direction in the type and scope of selections made and (2) to secure adequate funds to purchase the desired books. The latter, unfortunately, is a never-ending problem. The demands on the instructional dollar are manifold, and it behooves the principal to evaluate and scrutinize every request. Because of the cost of books, the library materials are frequently the victims of economizing measures.

Probably the most important function of the principal in bringing children and books together is that of encourager and interpreter. He should encourage teachers to try their ideas and work with new techniques, to work in areas where they might be reluctant because of fear of failure or outside criticism. Often the very climate that would most contribute to children's reading habits and literary tastes is never attained because it is safer and easier to "follow the book."

Outside pressures seldom materialize where the school (and principal, in particular) has interpreted in down-to-earth language what the instructional program is attempting to do. Similarly, funds are more likely to be available for programs for which the "downtown office" can see the value. Interpretation also intersects public relations, and principals should not be reluctant to use every means possible to interpret a broad reading program—its specific advantages and needs—to the community.

Let us remember that there are few things that light a child's way so well as books and "Those who have torches will pass them on to others."

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(Note: Alphabetized listing of children's books appears in the appendix.)

DISCUSSION

DR. AUSTIN: Mr. Bone made the point that people who have been delegated the responsibility and authority for selecting books must increase their own knowledge, sources and backgrounds. I believe it impossible for the principal to do this alone, and we need much better pre-service and in-service programs in teaching reading and children's literature. My involvement in the studies *The Torchlighters* and *The First R* causes me to recommend that teachers have at least a three-hour course in the teaching of reading and a three-hour course in children's literature.

As Mr. Bone said, teachers need to know techniques and materials for learning to know children's books—sources of book reviews, professional books in the area of children's literature, annotated lists, and the books themselves. In regard to the in-service program, on a principal's shoulders falls the major responsibility for helping teachers to improve instructional programs, for giving explicit guidance in reading and literature. As the principal, so goes the school. Teachers in selecting books should have recourse to standards which the principal and consultants have helped them to set up.

Like Mr. Bone, I am concerned about certification of teachers in the future. Among the 45 recommendations made in *The First R* is one based on the need for a four-year program in Liberal Arts and Sciences followed by a two-year program in professional education. The latter would have one year of course work enabling the student to do a good job, a second year as interne with a master teacher in at least two school systems with a minimal salary.

DR. BRACKEN: Mr. Bone, speaking of teachers' too often deficient qualifications remarked, "Who will be the victims I know." Directors of reading clinics also know. It is children who get into difficulty.

He also mentioned having an adequately staffed district depository for children's books as well as an on-site library. We know that many teachers develop their own classroom libraries to supplement the school library—contributions by pupils, by service groups, by the teacher's own purchase of books she must have to meet the interests and needs of certain children. Granted—we ought not to have to use these means; but an enthusiastic teacher will get the books she needs in one way or another. Besides, I suspect if PTA's and Dad clubs were involved in our problem needs often enough, they would know more about school activities and might be less criticism-prone.

What will constitute a "book" in the future? It may be the beautiful hard-covered book of today, or a book accompanied by a tape or filmstrip, a creative-type response pamphlet, magnificently colored large prints, artifacts or perhaps a computer. If the book is kept the focus, creative use of such aids and devices might build the rich and exciting background for all children.

DR. ANDERSON: I would stress Mr. Bone's point that selecting a book for the children's library calls for extreme care. Too often a ready-made book list or a late catalog is the sole guide.

One principal had to deal with irate parents who opposed having an unexpurgated edition of *Gulliver's Travels* in the school library. They considered it hardly fit for an elementary school child to read, and certainly there are episodes of questionable taste. A recent book translated from the Swedish have vulgar situations and such doubtful humor as that induced by turning in false fire alarms. Sometimes pressure groups force the removal of a worthy book; for instance, I'm told that a biography of George Washington was forced because his horse was called "Nig."

As to teacher preparation, I know of no one in California education who believes academic knowledge to be without value for a teacher. Indeed, the entire career of an elementary teacher calls for updating himself. No one leaves college as a completely prepared person academically. For instance, see how the new math and new science require going back to summer school. Any credential program built on the basis that the beginning teacher goes out prepared as a final product will never be successful.

Many of us are concerned about the attack on anything labeled education as a how-to-do-it course. Journalism schools do promote more knowledge of sociology, but they are not taking out of their program the practical how-to-do-it program of training a journalist. In military service, we know that personnel need greater political orientation; but anyone advocating that this happen at the expense of the basic preparation for military service will find every political group rising in protest. Yet that is happening to education.

Years ago a book *Willingly to School* called attention to the educational efficiency achieved when we start with knowledge of the child and his interests rather than an encyclopedic body of knowledge to be mastered. It is tragic, I think, that adult attention in our times may have caused us to return to the practices of the past that made a day in school one of tension and frustration for so many children.

QUESTION: There are two ways that we in the profession are stimulated to seek knowledge: being insightful or sufficiently excited to seek knowledge on our own, or to have the stimulant legislated for us. Are you proposing, Mr. Bone, that legislative qualification is appropriate?

MR. BONE: I am saying that this has happened in education—we abdicate so many of our responsibilities that people move in and take over in this area, people who really have little or no basis for what they are doing or are advocating. We got pressured into this new credentialing situation in California. As a consequence, things that are basically important in the elementary school, namely teaching competency in reading, have been shunted off to one side. It is possible for a person to leave a college with a degree and teaching credential and not know one thing about teaching reading, let alone knowing anything about literature, let alone knowing how to select books. Again, I would emphasize that there is very little good practice that is not built on good theory, and good theory comes from the college classroom. Yet in this area, with the new credential requirements, it is perfectly possible for a person to know little about teaching children in the elementary school except for what he learns in student teaching. Teachers will fail because they don't know how to teach children.

Dr. Anderson: I am afraid we may be talking about a local problem of no national concern, but I think the nation will be concerned with what might happen to children's literature. In a few of our colleges it is offered as an English course and, as such, it is academically respected. If offered as an education course, it is not.

Dr. Bracken: This is not just a local problem. We have this situation in the university where I work. In many places I know of, Dr. Anderson, children's literature is not a credit course in the Department of English. However, I think it is desirable that a person who knows the procedures of using literature with children also have a wide background in the content of the material.

Dr. Austin: May I add a positive note here? Four years ago following the publication of *The Torchlighters,* we followed through to find out what states would do in the future. The trend we have observed in the past four years is the upgrading of the whole educational program. We do know that the quality of teachers is higher today than it has been in all our history. However, colleges still must change some of their admission policies for entrance into departments of education and courses must definitely become better in order to be recognized by people, not only in education but outside our chosen field.

We also know that reading is being taught as well as it has ever been in our history; but we are attempting to look ahead and make sure that we are providing the kind of education that children who will be leaders in 1970 and 1980 will need, and the only way to do this is continually to upgrade all our programs. Therefore, we do want our prospective teachers to have as broad a background in Liberal Arts and Sciences as we can provide for them; but we must not slight Education in the process of upgrading their academic knowledge and background.

Mr. Bone: To get back to books and literature—in the process of bringing children and books together, we must be careful that we do not drive them apart. For instance a sixth grade boy, a friend of mine, is one in a class of 40, all of whom are reading *Captain Courageous.* All have ditto sheets of questions on analyzing the characters in the book—why did they do this and what kind of a person this one is. If teaching literature this way doesn't kill interest in books, I can think of nothing else that will.

I make a plea that children read just because they like to read and because a book offers something they can't get anywhere else. Not many of them can go to the East Coast or to Europe or observe the custom in Africa firsthand; but they can read a book and feel how other people like themselves feel inside, know what they are thinking.

Question: I would like to ask Mr. Bone what specific administrative procedures he used to bring children and books together. He suggested many techniques that teachers can use; but I would like to know how he imparts these to teachers, how he carries on an in-service program.

Mr. Bone: I try to establish a climate in my school where the teachers have a free working relationship, where they are willing and able and encouraged to select their own books, to try new techniques, to employ procedures they have read about.

I try to encourage the community. My school is only six years old, and building a new school library is a very difficult task. We have had great cooperation from the PTA in purchasing books, in helping to make parents aware of books, and making flexible schedules for bringing children into contact with books constantly.

I require very few things of teachers in the school, but one thing I do require is that there be a literature period every day from kindergarten to sixth grade. I encourage a library schedule arranging for all children go to the library. I encourage the teachers to participate in the selection of books, and to be as familiar as possible with the books that are available. I try to act as a catalyst for getting books and children together.

Question: Why should a library not be extended to be an instructional center?

Mr. Bone: Other than those areas that are concerned directly with reading and books, for example filmstrips or recording of stories, I do not feel that the librarian is an audio-visual technician. The librarian's time is more rightfully devoted to things directly related to the library itself—book selection, reading guidance, supervision of simple research for pupil reports—as a supplementary or resource person for classroom teachers. I don't think that a librarian can be involved in helping teachers select or house filmstrips and at the same time do an adequate job in helping Mr. X with books that are related to family relationships or family customs in Mexico.

TENNESSEE KENT

ASSOCIATE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, SAN FRANCISCO

7. Children, Books and Teachers

A Superintendent Speaks

SAN FRANCISCO'S elementary school teachers and administrators are fortunate in the number and variety of reading materials available for use in the instructional program. These materials are supplied by the State and by the local school district. Both basic and supplementary texts are distributed by the state.

Selection and Distribution of Reading Materials

Recognizing the importance of a wide variety of reading materials in the elementary schools, the city's teachers and administrators have developed a comprehensive resource list from which each elementary school selects library books, supplementary texts, and other reading materials. Schools order from this list annually in terms of a book budget which is allotted from district funds to the respective schools on a pupil enrollment basis.

This list is a product of the diligent work of the San Francisco Elementary Schools Book Committee, a standing committee composed of approximately 35 classroom teachers representing all grade levels and all geographic areas of the city. Committee membership also includes the Supervisor of Libraries and Textbooks, an elementary supervisor, an elementary principal and assistant principal, and two elementary school librarians. A classroom teacher always serves as committee chairman.

A rotation plan of service insures maximum participation on the part of teachers and administrators. This committee has been serving the elementary schools for many years and is widely recognized for its excellent contribution to the educational program.

The primary function of the Elementary Schools Book Committee is the study and evaluation of available printed materials which may be used to implement and enrich the elementary school program. Because the committee carries on its work continuously throughout the school year, members have an opportunity to review the new reading materials as they come off the press. It is common practice for members to try out examination copies in their own classrooms in order to check pupil reactions and to involve other teachers and classes in the school in evaluative procedures.

One of the outstanding accomplishments of this committee is the compilation of an annotated list of 1500 titles suggested as the Basic Collection for the Elementary School Library. This collection features the following classifications: picture books, fiction, short story collections, religion and mythology, social sciences, pure science, applied science, language, fine arts, literature, history, geography, biography, and references. To insure a balanced list, consideration is given to the allotment of titles in each classification. In addition to this basic library collection, the resource list includes a Supplementary Textbooks list from which schools may order books in sets.

To prepare teachers for their work on this committee, the librarians first conduct a series of in-service training meetings. They review models of annotations and introduce committee members to the resource books dealing with literature appreciation and with the skills and techniques involved in book evaluation. Such titles as *Children and Books* by May Hill Arbuthnot (1) and *Children's Literature in the Elementary School* by Charlotte Huck and Doris Young (5) are used.

Criteria have been outlined to assist committee members in their evaluations. Each set of criteria is directed to specific type of book and provides guidelines in reviewing titles in the classifications for which it is designed.

Every new book introduced is reviewed by at least two members, each working independently. The written reviews are then compared and discussed by small groups working within the committee. When there is any disagreement, a third person reviews the book. Then, on the basis of the group appraisal, a recommendation is made for acceptance or rejection. This results in a priority listing in each classification.

New titles in the respective classifications are then compared with those on the Basic Collection for Elementary School Libraries and on the Supplementary Textbooks list. Substitutions are made on the basis of quality and need. Thus, these lists are re-evaluated continuously in terms of quality selection and emerging curricular needs. This continuous re-evaluation helps to pinpoint the unmet needs in available material and assists the district in interpreting this problem to publishers.

Recently, a fruitful new plan was incorporated in the evaluative procedure when social studies textbooks were being considered. Instead of limiting the evaluation to the social studies texts, there was also a review of the available related reading material. For example, biographies that dealt with certain historical periods were reviewed; stories with historical backgrounds were checked; biography, fiction, poetry, folklore, and related books in science, art and music were examined. Thus each teacher became better acquainted with the reading material that would enrich and extend pupil learning experiences.

The Elementary Schools Book Committee also serves as one of the State reviewing committees which evaluate textbooks submitted for State adoption. In this capacity, committee members work under the direction of a member of the California State Curriculum Commission. He uses their evaluative studies and recommendations in the preparation of his reports to the Curriculum Commission. During the periods devoted to state textbook evaluations, additional teachers are added to the book committee on a short-term basis. This is done to ease the work load and to enlist the aid of teachers with certain specialized training.

Participation on the Elementary Schools Book Committee has afforded excellent in-service training for teachers and administrators. Members gain a rich background of information about children's books. They become skilled in the techniques of book evaluation. As they work together under the professional leadership of the elementary librarians and the supervisors and become personally acquainted with a wide variety of reading materials, they develop a better understanding of the important role these materials play in the instructional program and of the responsibility involved in insuring quality in the selection. In addition, these teachers serve as resource people in their own schools. They inform, interpret, and stimulate interest in new reading materials.

Sample copies of all titles found on the comprehensive resource list are on display in a central book center located in the Bureau of Libraries and Textbooks. These are available for examination by teachers and administrators to assist them in their annual selection of the reading materials which will best meet the needs, interests and maturity of their pupils.

Opportunities in the School Day for Bringing Children and Books Closer Together

Every elementary school has either an organized library or an organized book center. In addition, each classroom has a library and supplementary books for study and recreational reading. Teachers select reading materials on the basis of pupil interest and ability. The resultant free reading offers the teacher an opportunity to observe individual pupil reading behavior.

Audience reading of selected poems and stories, recognized as an important part of the total reading program, provides excellent opportunities for developing literary appreciation. Attention is directed to the beauty of language and to the effect on meaning of pitch, tone and inflection. Frequently, teachers read aloud to children to inspire an interest in reading and an appreciation of literature. The teacher, who is the personification of a good reader, can engender an enthusiasm for books.

Teachers are encouraged to capitalize throughout the school day upon opportunities to share poetry with children. At a meeting planned for new teachers, a capable classroom teacher stressed the enjoyment children derive from poetry. She credited May Hill Arbuthnot (2) for the following thought:

> Using poetry with children as it should be used—for their refreshment, for merriment, for stimulation, for quiet reassurance—can lead to times of unequaled pleasure for both children and adults.

Quoting from her own experience, this teacher said,

> Poetry can smooth over many rough spots in the day. To the child who is dawdling in line, holding up everyone else, Lewis Carroll's (3) " 'Will you walk a little faster?', said a whiting to a snail" will convey your message. Have you ever heard a tap-tap-tap from under a desk when you had been expecting quiet? Try a line from Walter de la Mare (4), "Someone came knocking, I'm sure-sure-sure." It is just as effective as a reproof, and it establishes a rapport between you and the class which a sharp word never does.
>
> Again, if it has been the kind of day when the paint was spilled just before the visitors arrived and the paste jar's crash provided an unwelcome climax to that carefully planned lesson, Christopher Morley's (6) "The Plumppuppets," those little fairies who plump up your pillows and lull you to sleep, "No matter what troubles have bothered the day," can send you and the children off with a smile and a feeling that things will be better tomorrow. Don't, however, make this kind of experience an extra chore for yourself. Just keep it in mind, and ever so often you'll find just the poem to suit an occasion. Then, one day you'll discover that, quite effortlessly, you've developed a repertoire.

San Francisco classroom teachers have always enjoyed the benefits of a close working relationship with the San Francisco Public Library. Many elementary schools visit the neighborhood branch libraries on a scheduled basis. Public librarians instruct visiting classes in the use of library facilities. They offer storytelling and storyreading programs both at the branch library and, upon invitation, at the school. Teachers are permitted, as a special classroom service, to borrow fifteen library books at one time. Several schools, finding branch libraries inaccessible, utilize the services of the Bookmobile.

In-service Training

In-service training opportunities for San Francisco elementary teachers include in-service courses, committee assignments, pilot programs, special curriculum projects, demonstrations, and on-the-job supervisory help. In this program, much attention is given to the language-experience approach to instruction with particular emphasis upon the use of multiple media to motivate an interest in reading and to stimulate the use of a wide variety of reading materials.

An in-service course in children's literature, conducted each term by an elementary school librarian, familiarizes teachers with masterpieces from children's literature and helps them, through thoughtful reading, to perceive standards of excellence for judging books for children. It serves to familiarize them with good standard aids in book selection and with professional materials for guiding them in their ever widening knowledge of and appreciation for the best in children's literature.

During the course, teachers have an opportunity to read widely from all areas of the Basic List of Library Books and to evaluate these books in terms of their potentialities for:

a) Contributing to the personal-social development of the child;
b) Stimulating new interests and broadening old ones;
c) Providing functional information to satisfy a child's quest for knowledge and wisdom;
d) Enriching the curriculum by supplementing and extending content and by deepening appreciation in the various curricular areas; and
e) Giving children the opportunity to practice, improve, and develop their reading skills through joyful, purposeful reading.

This course encourages the effective use of available audiovisual materials and other multisensory resources in conjunction with library materials. It has really helped teachers to plan and develop a significant literature program aligned with the basic principles of reading guidance, utilizing the procedures for bringing children and books together, and characterized by various activities designed to replace the stereotyped oral and written book report. Teachers learn the techniques for teaching library skills that enable children's more effective and enlightened use of library materials.

Another course, given by an elementary librarian, is called "Library Research as a Background for Current Events." Its purposes are to help teachers in the formidable and continuing task of keeping well informed in today's rapidly changing world and to engender a more creative approach in the teaching of current events.

To further these ends, three types of activities have been followed. The first is the consideration and discussion of significant events and issues featured in current news media. The second is a careful examination of a wide variety of materials to evaluate their usefulness in adding depth of meaning to current affairs. Many types of materials have been considered such as maps, books, magazines, pamphlets, films, filmstrips and study prints. The span of difficulty has ranged from the simplest picture stories to adult books and periodicals needed to satisfy the intellectual curiosity of the gifted child. The third type of activity has developed techniques for encouraging maximum use of these instructional materials.

Using this course as a springboard for curriculum development in the schools, an elementary supervisor, working with teachers in the course, is planning and conducting a series of demonstrations. The purpose is to show teachers the many approaches which may be used in the current events program. At one demonstration, the children discussed a news broadcast of the day before. It was related to the late President Kennedy's Civil Rights program. After reviewing his main objectives, children contributed additional related news items. The significance and pertinence of each item and issue were thoughtfully assessed by the children.

Discussion triggered questions related to the historical background of the civil rights issue and stimulated an interest in research. It became evident that the children's interests would not be satisfied until they had explored background reading in reference books, biographies, history texts and trade books. The observers at this demonstration had an opportunity to see how a skillful classroom teacher creates a learning environment conducive to a free exchange of ideas leading children into an extended and enriched reading program.

Because of the attention given to the language-experience and multiple-media approach to instruction, teachers are encouraged to explore new approaches to bringing books and children closer together. This is particularly true in the Superintendent's Compensatory Program which has been initiated in several schools located in culturally disadvantaged areas. The primary objective of this program is the improvement of the pupil's communication skills. Children are selected on the basis of their special needs in language development. The program capitalizes upon small group techniques, and each teacher works with several groups a day.

In preparing to initiate this program, the elementary staff began an in-service training course for the compensatory teachers. This is conducted through a series of monthly meetings.

From the very beginning, it was understood that the instructional program must necessarily depart from the traditional. "More of the same," no matter how skillfully taught, would not meet the requirements of the compensatory program. New approaches, a change in emphases, and a willingness to experiment with new materials and equipment were recognized to be essential. The need to develop pupil motivation and to improve pupil self-image was of paramount importance.

The compensatory program has capitalized upon the multiple-media approach in developing language and reading skills and in motivating reading interests. In addition to reading texts, teachers have used newspapers, magazines, research materials, fugitive materials and weekly readers. They have used films, filmstrips, radio and television programs, resource speakers, records and tape recordings. Field trips have played an important role in enriching the program.

At one of the in-service meetings of the compensatory teachers, one member gave an overview of her program. In this, she highlighted the learning experiences resulting from a recent field trip. This teacher and cooperating parents took a group of 62 fourth, fifth, and sixth graders on a tour of Chinatown and the Aquatic Park area. The teacher organized the children into several groups, each led by a parent, thus enabling her to include all the children in her compensatory classes.

In preparation for the excursion, the teacher had displayed many pictures of Chinatown and Chinese people and featured the book, *This Is San Francisco,* written by Miroslav Sasek (10). The children discussed plans for the tour and plotted their route on a map. In the discussions, they indicated what they would look for and what they expected to see.

As the teacher described some of the learning experiences resulting from this field trip, the listeners sensed the many insights this tour had provided in discovering more about individual children and about the dynamics of the group. They noted particularly how the children's sensory impressions led to an abundance of oral expression and stimulated the flow of descriptive language. The children had expressed keen interest in such architectural features as the lions outside the local bank and the dragons entwined around the columns of the temple. They had actually stroked them! They were fascinated with the fine fabrics and art objects on display in the stores. The ride on the cable car was, of course, one of the day's highlights.

The teacher explained that when the children returned to school they were easily and freely using words such as "brocades," "damask," "embroidered," and "antique" as they relived their experiences and recorded them in a chart movie to be shared with their schoolmates. Delightful drawings, made to accompany the movie script, revealed keen observation and an absorption of information.

Among the multiple interests that grew out of this field trip was a desire to study fabrics. The resourceful teacher told how she had brought in books, pamphlets and brochures to encourage research and extended reading in this study. Samples of each fabric were available for "feeling" and for close inspection. A fascinating series of booklets, well illustrated, was obtained to show the step-by-step process in the production of silk thread.

Such experiences awaken interests which motivate the reluctant reader to use various reading materials in order to satisfy his curiosity.

Special Activities in the Elementary Schools

Many programs dedicated to bringing books and children closer together have been developed in the elementary schools. Some have emerged as extended experiences in the regular program. Others have been organized as enrichment experiences in programs for the gifted. Descriptions of several of these programs are recorded in a series of curriculum leaflets which have been distributed to all elementary schools. These have stimulated many ideas in developing effective classroom programs.

One leaflet (7) describes a literature program for gifted primary grade pupils who meet twice a week for special group instruction. In one activity each child was to select an exciting or humorous passage from the book he was currently reading. The selection might be read, told in the child's own words, or explained through the display of a picture illustrating the passage. The standards for these reports had been carefully developed with the class:

2

1. The terms *humorous, exciting,* and *suspenseful* were discussed.
2. The child who chose to read his selection was expected to read with fluency and expression. If he chose to tell about it, he was to plan carefully so that he could make his presentation clearly and concisely.
3. If necessary for understanding his selection, a child was to give a brief summary of preceding events.

After each selection, lively discussion ensued. Other children who had read the book commented on parts that they had enjoyed, or expanded upon the selection. Those unfamiliar with the book became involved through their teacher's thought-provoking questions such as "What does curious mean? Will being curious help one to learn? Why, then, did George get into trouble by being curious?"

After the discussion, attention was turned to word pictures. The following is quoted from the curriculum leaflet:

> "I have a word picture for you. It's raining today. It's muddy. What does a muddy road mean to you?" A few answers were volunteered; the descriptive words were fairly common ones—*wet, slippery, splash.* But with the development of new vocabulary in mind, the teacher asked questions that led the children to more expressive descriptions. "What sound would your feet make? What would you have on? Would you wish to be barefoot? What if it were a warm day in summer, and a country road?" Soon such words as *clammy, squish,* and *soothing* became a part of the word pictures.

When the teacher finally asked whether the children had found any word pictures in their reading, many hands went up.

> "The seal was slick and shiny."
>
> "Slick means tricky," commented a first grader.
>
> "Sometimes it does. Would a seal be tricky, or might there be another meaning of the word?"
>
> "Slick means smooth, too. His fur is wet and smooth."
>
> "He looks streamlined. He can swim fast."
>
> And finally, delivered with a twinkling eye, "A seal might be tricky at that. The ones at the zoo do tricks!"

An assistant principal has experimented with a program employing a mass instruction approach. The technique involves bringing together large groups of children for instruction under the direction of a teacher or administrator. The experiment was tried first in the field of classic literature, and all fourth, fifth and sixth grade pupils participated. They met in the school auditorium each Wednesday morning.

The title of the story to be considered was announced one week previous to the auditorium presentation. Each class received a mimeographed sheet giving a brief synopsis of the author's life and listing the parts of the book to be read. A list of questions challenged the children to think about such things as basic moral values, the effects of geography upon the lives of the story characters, and the effects of historical events related to the story.

The curriculum leaflet, "The Wednesday Review of Literature" (9) describes this program.

> Picture an auditorium filled with 4th, 5th, and 6th graders and their teachers; a stage with attractive bulletin boards, displaying illustrated highlights of several of the books that have been explored previously; tables showing samples of book reviews, illustrations, and research work related to the literature being studied; and the Assistant Principal seated on the stage in front of a microphone.
>
> The Assistant Principal told the group that there had been some outstanding work done following the previous week's story, *The Yearling.* There were summaries, various kinds of book reviews, research concerning the authors, and biographical sketches. Some of the children in the 6th grade had made a delightful mural depicting an exciting scene from *The Yearling.* Other children had made individual pictures illustrating highlights of the story or delineating characters. The creators of these illustrations were asked to tell about their contributions. Others were asked to read thoughtful answers to the questions of the previous week, and the Assistant Principal explained why she thought the answers were particularly pertinent.
>
> Next, the Assistant Principal announced that the story for that day would be *The Black Stallion,* by Walter Farley. She mentioned Farley's consuming interest in horses and the events in his life that had led to his writing the book. She moved into the story through the interest she had created in the author.
>
> Then she began to read to the attentive assemblage. The children were obviously enthralled as they heard about the storm, the exciting rescue, and the subsequent events that led to the stallion's becoming a successful race horse. Parts of the story were read, with beautiful diction and suspenseful inflection. The other parts were told so well that the thread of the story was carried without any loss of interest. Occasionally, the Assistant Principal injected such suggestions as, "The stallion helps the boy in so many ways that it will be wonderful for you, when you read this book, to see how he does it." There were many opportunities for group response, which gave the feeling of a "town meeting" and kept the children closely involved.
>
> After the story the Assistant Principal reviewed the vocabulary and concepts in the questions given to the children before they came to the audi-

torium. They had been asked to write on one of the following: 1) Explain in 150 words or less what factor you believe was most important in the training of the wild stallion. 2) In 200 words or less, list three story writing elements that made the story exciting.

These children returned to their classrooms with an increased respect for recognized authors and for the contributions of their peers. They had gained further appreciation of good literature. Their ability to listen was encouraged and strengthened. They had become more aware that books are for pleasure, as well as for information; and that this pleasure could be extended by thinking critically and expressing themselves creatively. Each child, regardless of his ability, was able to participate in whole-group activity at his own level of depth and understanding.

A major objective of the elementary summer program is to encourage new ideas in curriculum development. In keeping with that objective, a special literature program was designed and conducted during a six-week summer session by an elementary school librarian. In the ensuing school year a number of literature-oriented programs developed. "Proposed Guidelines for a Literature Program in the Elementary Schools" (8) describes this special literature program and gives these suggestions for bringing children and literature together:

1) Storytelling and reading aloud of selections made by the teacher from various types of literature
2) Book talks, including introductions to authors, illustrators, storytellers, world travelers; background material such as stories behind stories, sampling of passages
3) A readily available, balanced collection of literature
4) Concomitant use of multisensory resources
5) Round table discussions to help children discover for themselves that good books have deeper meanings and values which far transcend plot
6) Use of literature to vitalize and enrich all areas of study and school experience

The summer project's theme, "Windows on the World," focused attention in successive weeks on the North American continent with emphasis on our heritage of American folk literature; on Asia and the Pacific; Africa; Europe; and South America. The sixth week of school was reserved for a backward look, discussion, and evaluation.

In the words of the director-librarian, "Windows on the World" yielded the following results:

In one class the children learned "origami," the art of Japanese paper folding. The folk dancing class learned folk dances from the various countries. Primary grades learned games enjoyed by children of other lands. A student teacher demonstrated the use of the abacus in the arithmetic classes. Children brought their stamp and coin collections. One primary group followed Sharp Ears on his trip around the world in Beaty's *Sharp Ears: The Baby Whale*. Some studied the animals around the world and life in the oceans.

In the science class "Boots and His Brothers," a Norwegian folk tale, was told to lead the children into the thought that scientific discovery comes through wondering about and investigating everyday things.

During the final week, we took a backward look at our travels. At this time the older children were better able to appreciate the way folk literature reflects the particular culture, philosophy, and thinking of a people, as well as the basic values, hopes, and fears common to all mankind. The younger children's concepts of the world and its people had grown immeasurably.

Conclusion

The activities described in this paper indicate only a few of the many San Francisco elementary school programs which serve to bring children and books closer together. There is consistent emphasis upon teacher involvement in activities designed for professional growth, individual, creative thinking and consequent enriched learning opportunities for children. In turn, the administrative staff has become better acquainted with the many facets of teacher potential and, by tapping this rich resource, has been able to upgrade the total instructional program.

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Discussion

Dr. Austin: Knowing how very much people throughout the country are searching for ideas to implement a program for professional growth for teachers, I should like to ask Miss Kent the same kind of questions these people would. In the first place, as your teachers were reviewing social studies texts and available related materials, did they have access to a list of the best books?

Miss Kent: Yes, these are the lists I referred to as a resource list for the elementary schools. This is divided into several sections, the major one being an annotated basic collection for school libraries. This is accompanied by a separate indexed order sheet for administrators. A second large section lists supplementary textbooks which teachers may order in sets of 15 or less in primary grades, 20 or less in intermediate grades. There are separate sections on workbooks, dictionaries and weekly newspapers.

Dr. Austin: Do the teachers on the book evaluation committee have released time?

Miss Kent: Yes, they do. The meetings are scheduled twice a month on Wednesday afternoons from 1:30 to 3:30. I should say, however, that dedicated as these teachers are, they go home with books in their arms. Needless to say, two hours twice a month are not sufficient for the kind of evaluation they are doing.

Dr. Austin: In respect to the course in children's literature each semester, I am wondering about the time of day, how teachers are selected, how many can be included in a class, what kinds of activities are part of the program, how many class sessions, and other practical details. And do teachers have released time to participate in this course?

Miss Kent: Courses in our regular in-service program come after school hours. There are fifteen sessions in a course, which is repeated every term. Increment credit is given for it.

Teachers are selected on a sign-up basis, often through their registering by phone. The usual enrollment is 35. If we have marked interest, we will often double up on a course because, with 1,663 teachers, we have quite a group to service. Occasionally, if we are initiating an experimental course, we may take teachers on a selective basis because we have noted that in certain classrooms interesting things are happening. If we can pull these people together for some intensive work, we will have a pilot study going.

Dr. Bracken: May I comment on lists of books? Many, many lists are already in existence. One of our problems across the nation is getting the kind of guidance we would have teachers follow in ways of selecting and using such lists. Some of us are continually recommending the ALA list. A list is only as good as the qualifications of the people who compiled it. I'd like to remark, too, that one step farther than consulting a readymade list is to provide displays of the listed books.

To turn to another part of the paper: Poetry can smooth over many rough spots in the day. Not only poetry, but a bit of nonsense, a bit of fantasy will clear the atmosphere of a classroom when the situation is tense and people have become touchy. This kind of incidental teaching of literature is a preferred approach. We don't meet any of the pitfalls of analyzing too technically items which are intended for enjoyment.

Miss Kent's mention of having literature courses offered each term reminded me of Jean Betzner's remark that every classroom teacher should have a refresher course in children's literature every five years. Wouldn't this be wonderful for you and me. Of course, educators know many excellent ideas which they are unable to put into practice. For instance, we know that providing enriching experiences (as through literature) is the real way to extend vocabulary and improve comprehension.

I recall a classroom in which Stonehenge was the topic of discussion. One youngster commented, "Why, it is just a collection of stones!" Another responded, "Stonehenge isn't a collection of rocks. Stonehenge is a mystery." You can guess the difference in the background of these two youngsters. The first had simply looked at a picture in the text; the second had been to Salisbury Plain on a very cloudy, misty day, had been tremendously impressed by this experience and had afterward read copiously concerning Stonehenge.

Dr. Anderson: It is refreshing to find a place where professional vision and economic resources have combined to produce the kind of organization that Miss Kent described. It seems to me that the elementary curriculum is going through a transitional stage. Back in the 1920's, the platoon school was set up in Gary. Many buildings housed a library, auditorium, gymnasium, and special rooms for science, music and art. It was an effort to bring the specialist into the elementary school. The program was called platoon because it was departmentalized and children, in certain periods, moved *en masse* from room to room.

The platoon program proved to be impersonal because of the volume of pupils that a teacher had to deal with, and so we had a transition to the self-contained classroom. Now, with strong emphasis on the academic, it may well be that we are being forced to return to some type of departmentalization. If we are, we must consider some way of getting a basic library and a librarian in each elementary school.

As people read this report and sense the trends of our time, I hope administrators will show a renewed interest in making library resources immediately available to elementary school children. I know this can be done in many ways besides having a platoon school organization. In Racine, Wisconsin the community library is built into the corner of each school. Pupils in Monroe, Wisconsin are scheduled to visit the public library regularly.

I, too, am pleased that San Francisco is brave enough to have school trips. We hear so much about accidents and libel laws. In our area a school trip is considered almost unpatriotic. The most remote area has some historical sites worth exploring. Trips are popular in England.

RUTH ADAIR FRENCH

CONSULTANT, MT. DIABLO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT, CONCORD, CALIFORNIA

8. Working the Vineyard

A Reading Consultant Speaks

THE locale for the teachers' experiences with literature which I am discussing is a non-fictional community. It is a sprawling, suburban area of industry, nut orchards, rolling hills, and harbors. Changes occur with the seasons in that the walnut orchard of the autumn may become the new school setting of the early spring, stocked with 600 children and homes for 200 families. This is the Mt. Diablo Unified School District, the mushrooming growth of which began about 1947, at which time the original country villages each supported its own elementary school. The district now maintains thirty-one elementary schools with a range in enrollment from 400 to 1400 children. The population from kindergarten through the sixth grade is about 21,000 children. Five general curriculum consultants, and one music consultant serve approximately 678 elementary teachers. Every school supports an elementary library. Fourteen elementary librarians are employed in the elementary schools.

The Mt. Diablo community is a homing place for workers who commute to San Francisco and the urban Bay area. A migratory population, low socio-economic areas, and crowded living are problems of of the area. Less than five per cent of the population is interracial, and distances require that one-third of the school population be transported by bus.

Since 1947, when the separate districts joined to form the Mt. Diablo Unified School District, curriculum consultants, teachers, librarians and lay citizen groups have worked cooperatively to improve the instructional program. The improvement in programs and learning experiences began from scratch and has made major use of the pilot-action approach to curriculum development, with the leadership and direction of the curriculum staff. Consultants have worked with master teachers and administrators in experimentally designing, testing and subsequently trying out materials and procedures with an increasing number of classes. As the curriculum develops, different teachers with different kinds of classes try out the materials and suggest improvements. The program is complicated by the fact that each year requires orientation in curriculum for many new teachers.

The action curriculum making has resulted in the production of various elementary curriculum guides, including the *Kindergarten* and *Reading Guides,* from which I shall abstract certain experiences today. (8) The Mt. Diablo consultant staff and pilot teachers also cooperated in the development of the *Contra Costa Social Studies Guides,* a project under the leadership of the Contra Costa County Curriculum Staff. (1) The professional consultants who assisted in these projects were James Hymes for Kindergarten, Walter Loban for Reading, and John Robinson and Hilda Taba for Social Studies.

The teachers who worked on the Kindergarten Guide were concerned with the problem of sequential learning initiated in the kindergarten and carried on by first-grade teachers. A much neglected and crucial need was the provision for ever-expanding opportunities for using oral language. Also the child's repertoire of experiences with books should be continuously growing, and balanced with formal reading instruction as part of the total plan. In the development of the Kindergarten Guide, the committee searched for books for all occasions, for content information and for special needs. A large collection including books to enrich dramatic play, to challenge the intellect and to develop sensory perception was made an integral part of the kindergarten program.

The group held a combined kindergarten-first grade workshop in April and organized teams of kindergarten and first-grade teachers. The first workshop was so successful that it has now become traditional. Not only do teachers gain from leadership and friendly sharing, but gain a better understanding of how to provide an integrated primary program.

One workshop group featured "Reading Picture Books," an activity wherein the children emulate a procedure usually carried on only by the teacher. While a child storyteller relates the sequences, a friend slowly turns the pages for him. With familiar stories, the children become quite proficient and like to listen to each other. The teacher makes sure that the physical environment is conducive to listening. This tape shows how Kathy told "The Three Bears" to her classmates.

One September, a perceptive second-grade teacher said to the reading consultant, "I wonder what I am going to do for these children this year? They can read anything now." This teacher, who enjoys working out new and unique procedures, realized that this group was very special. She believed that these children, who were already reading independently, would profit from a vital, creative reading program with skill developments tailored to their needs. She was searching for learning activities which would provide experiences in critical reading to broaden and deepen perception, foster imagination and creativeness and require participation in group work with their peers. She turned to creative dramatics using story materials read by the children and subsequently changed into creative plays *via* puppetry. They learned to create dialogues from narration, to identify the various scenes for dramatizing, to paint the scenery and to develop their own sound effects. Subsequently, the children learned to plan cooperatively, to practice by themselves and to present their plays. In this second taped sequence, you will hear first how the teacher planned with a group of three girls. The story is "Long Ago in the Everglades," from an old California State Text *Under the Sun*. Second, you will hear children with their peer chairman planning from the story *Snip, Snap, Snurr* and *The Yellow Sled,* by Maj. Lindman. Finally, you will hear a short section of one production, "The Golden Goose."

A chain of creative outcomes resulted from this literary exploration. Other teachers, wanting to see how some of the wrinkles were ironed out, visited the class and provided a receptive audience. They in turn extended and made adaptations for use with their own classes. Although this activity was started several years ago, current teachers find puppet plays a perennial favorite with second graders.

Varied ways of reacting to literature requires skill in guiding different types of group activities. Such group tasks as planning with the teacher, planning with the peer chairman, painting scenery, and practicing the plays were sometimes going on simultaneously. These jobs were listed on the blackboard, and a group might engage in two or three different activities during one reading period.

Motivating Interest Through Artist Demonstrations

When the community features cultural and artistic offerings, it is important to provide opportunities for children to view them. An anthropologist teacher, recently returned from a field assignment in working with the Navajos, had a famous artist team, John and Mabel Burnsides, as her house guests during a two-week appearance at the De Young Museum in San Francisco. She invited them to her school for one day, and they spent the following day at another elementary school as well. All the children in both schools and district teachers were invited to visit them.

Mabel Burnsides Meyers, a talented weaver, demonstrated carding, spinning and weaving of the beautiful rugs she creates. An exhibit with pictures and materials included the native plants used in making the vegetable dyes and the colored yarns which she combs, cards and dyes.

John Burnsides, the tribal medicine man and jewelry maker, worked with turquoise and silver in creating the squash blossom necklaces, the bracelets and belts for which the Burnsides artists are famous. As an affectionate gesture to the children and his teacher host, he demonstrated sand painting. This is a religious healing ceremonial, viewed by few individuals today. The children were mesmerized by the agile skill with which he sifted the sand between the thumb and forefinger. When school was over, they returned with family members and friends. Darkness came before the final chant was sung.

This cultural opportunity was cherished by the children and the community. The children read many books about the Navajo people. When their teacher told how she had found an eagle feather on her pillow after her guests' departure, the children understood its meaning. They recalled Dancing Cloud's precarious adventures to the highest cliff to procure eagle feathers, and they thought it was a fitting symbol of good fortune for the recipient.

Courses Featuring Authors

The University of California at Berkeley held a symposium last summer featuring eminent poets, authors, editors, librarians, illustrators and book designers, each discussing his own specialty from a personal viewpoint. Librarians and teachers taking this course reported a unique experience giving them a fresh appreciation of the value of literature in the instructional program. In sharing this personalized experience, the participants engendered enthusiasm in others. They took a fresh look at books and made reappraisals. The book by Harry Behn, *The Painted Cave,* was reexamined with new appreciation of its poetic quality. *Baboushka* and other books by a recent new author, Ruth Robbins Schein, were considered as representative of a new trend in illustration and design for children's books.

A most gratifying outcome of the above symposium was a renewed interest in the lost art of storytelling. As one small boy worded his request for a favorite story, "Read it out of your face." The few and priceless skilled storytellers polished up their old repertoire because, as Annis Duff says, "The children are always new." (2)

At this point, the art of storytelling caught the children, and boys, particularly, are now developing the art and making their own favorite collection. One enjoyable activity is an example of cultural borrowing from Africa where storytelling is an important communication pattern as well as a highly developed art form. Verna Aardema, in explaining the origin of *Tales from the Story Hat,* describes the custom as follows:

> There is a storyteller in West Africa who wears a story hat. It is a wide brimmed hat of Guinea corn straw and from its brim dangles many tiny carvings done in wood and ivory. Bits of fur, tips of feathers, a leopard tooth intersperse the carvings.
>
> Whoever asks for a story picks an object, then he is off on whatever tale the thing represents.
>
> Stories in this book are akin to those he tells—he who carries his stories in his head and the Table of Contents on his hat.

Several fifth-grade boys of one class are making a similar story collection. Toy animals, human dolls, model cars, charms, and any number of interesting objects dangle from the straw hats of these fifth graders. Make your choice, and a tall tale, a ghost story, or a mystery will be forthcoming.

State Conferences and Literature

The reading consultant seeks professional opportunities which provide stretching experiences for himself; because if his own insight becomes stifled, he is ineffective in evoking greater potentials in others. An example of a growing experience for participants was the CASCD sections on contemporary literature, initiated by Miss Helen Heffernan of the State Department of Education and Mr. Norman Naas, Director of Secondary Curriculum in Mt. Diablo. These were offered at an annual California Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Conference in Sacramento. The focus of the sessions was the significance of contemporary literature for education. Several groups were invited, each to discuss a book which its members had read and analyzed. The books were the following: *Hawaii* by James Mitchener, *Advise and Consent* by Allen Drury, *The Masters* by C. F. Snow, and *The Dollmaker* by Harriet Arnow.

> The writer's group discussed *The Dollmaker,* the story of a Kentucky mountain family, a mother and five children who followed the husband to wartime Detroit. Trapped between familiar tradition and the strange ways of a bustling city, there was no place to turn.

In analyzing episodes and discussing the characters, we discovered that the author had included complete data for detailed case studies, so that in discussion, we asked ourselves and each other:

> What if unfortunate little Cassie in *The Dollmaker* had known just one teacher with talent, time, and knowledge for understanding a young five-year-old?
>
> What if Miss Huffacre, Cassie's first-grade teacher, had known how to accept a shy, lonely, apprehensive little girl?
>
> What if this teacher had been able to reassure Cassie's mother that her fantasy and lone conversation were not mental aberrations to be immediately cast out at whatever cost? For, as the mother tragically learned, the child did not part with the fantasy image which made her life endurable. Instead, she escaped the environment which demanded so much of her by taking herself and the bad inner witch child, Cally Lou, from the familiar alley playground to the hazardous, teeming switchyard across the tracks.

Using Literature to Foster Critical Thinking

Encouraging critical thinking in children requires special skill of the teacher in raising the operational level to the highest point compatible with the children's maturity. Frequently, children operate at the low level of memorization or recall in reacting to literature because the teacher does not know how to lead the children in the steps of high-quality thinking. (6)

The most recent experimental work of Jean Piaget and Barbara Inhelder at the University of Geneva is a continuation of their long exploration of the character of thought processes. (10) They show how, in questioning a child as he performs an intellectual task, the examiner can appraise rather clearly the hierarchy of intellectual thinking. The classroom teacher has the great responsibility of guiding and aiding the child through the sequential steps of the learning process which the particular task requires.

One of the most valuable contributions which curriculum planners, program designers, consultants, and pilot teachers can make to the improvement of instruction is (1) to understand themselves the content, the attitudes, and skills to be taught and the dynamics and techniques for learning them; and (2) to provide specifically for the special necessary training for the teachers who are to guide pupils in these processes.

European leaders in the Montessorian method have recognized the positive effect of making the sequential steps and pattern of learning clearly known to the learner. (9) In contrast, teachers in American schools do not stress aiding the child in mastering successive steps in learning. In a recent research study, the writer found that teachers were devoting less time to this core function of instruction than to any other. Results showed that even the most effective teacher was devoting only 11 per cent of the total teachers' acts to the learning process; whereas, with the least effective teacher, only 3 per cent of his total acts fell in the category of aiding the learner in the mastery of sequential steps in learning. (4)

To cite a very simple example, the following is an illustration of how a consultant and teacher worked to extend the thinking of the children in one third grade.

> The children had read the story of the *Three Giants* in their reading text. It is the story of three giants, a friendly trio wtih magical powers, who help a young prince win his bride and a kingdom. For these jolly giants, phenomenal feats are easy through the combination of cooperative efforts and magical power. In the performance of three tasks assigned by the queen, giant Long Fellow crosses an ocean in three big steps; giant Bright Eyes sees beyond the horizon, up to the sky and down to the bottom of the ocean; giant Sharp Ears hears everything that goes on in the whole world.
>
> With proficient help, the prince accomplishes three tasks, he tells the queen that she was thinking about her jeweled necklace lost three years ago, that it is buried at the bottom of the ocean; and with the help of Long Fellow and Sharp Ears, he retrieves it for the queen.

Different Levels of Interpretation

As one might anticipate, a question such as "What happened in the story?" will bring forth a sequential narration of remembered events. "Did anything else happen?" will continue the sequence at the same thinking level, enumerating any events which have been left out. These responses are at the factual naming level and require only the lower mental factors of memory and recall. We already know from responses to tests that children of this age can recall from memory up to eight or nine sequential events; so the teacher will learn little about these children from asking the first two question. However, if he asks "How would you perform these tasks today?" a myriad of ideas suggesting the help of rocket ships, jets and telephones are conjured up in the imaginative responses. If he continues with the identical questions directed to different children, the more perceptive thinkers will respond with complex plans involving the use of more technical inventions such as the X-ray, radio or telescope, the modern conquerors of matter, time and space. Since it is important in improving the operational thinking level to continue with a planned question sequence, the teacher might plan a subsequent discussion at another period focused on the question: "What changes have these inventions made in the lives of people?"

By assuming the instructional role, as described above, the teacher has fulfilled his task most effectively. First, he has left the structure open for the child who sees only the outer story and interprets it at the simple, literal level. Second, he has gained some information about the operational level of the class, although these assumptions would need to be verified further. Third, he has provided an opportunity for comparing, interpreting, imagining and generalizing. These are the skills for which the higher level of cognitive thinking are required. (12)

Unit Themes, Developmental Tasks, and Panel Discussions

Selecting books to emphasize a unit theme is an effective way of using books with fourth, fifth or sixth graders. One teacher focused upon the developmental task of achieving independence, because she felt it had high priority interest, particularly for sixth-grade boys who needed to explore some of the concomitants and responsibilities of independence, and to compare and contrast their own feelings with those of their peers. She chose the following group of books as ones in which the psychological conflicts related to the capacity for survival, conflicts with family, (fathers, particularly) and value dilemmas as to adequate criteria for choosing companions or judging success. Since the stories were all written in the first person, children identified with the characters easily and personalized their interpretations.

The books were the following:

And Now Miguel by Joseph Krumgold
Onion John by Joseph Krumgold
My Side of the Mountain by Jean George
Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe

After several children had read one or more books, panel discussions were held. A boy from each group represented the main character portrayed in his story by meeting and discussing his opinions with fictional friends as though they were contemporaries. It was a valuable experience; although, as might be expected, feelings about family differences were not completely resolved through this experience as the class, for example, did not accept the author's ending in *My Side of the Mountain.*

They did not welcome the family's coming to live with the self-sufficient runaway who had left home precisely to rid himself of them.

Literature and Sociodrama

Literature provides the content for experiences with sociodrama and role playing. Since it is the intimate story of how fictitious humans work through their own conflicts and feelings toward satisfying goals, the content has innate appeal for boys and girls. In reacting to literature, they can "try on temporarily" different roles which intrigue them without realistic commitments or concerns for consequences. (11) Sociodrama is a natural and effective technique for the acquisition of social learning which cannot be acquired as outcome of direct teaching of content. In fact, taped discussions of fourth graders subjected to limited factual information describing objectively the sickness, misery and limited educational opportunities of a poverty-stricken people, concluded only that they must be a stupid, shiftless lot who lacked the initiative to help themselves. In contrast, however, members of another fourth grade in role-playing scenes from *Crow Boy* by Taro Yashima, had no difficulty in understanding why Mr. Isobe, the teacher, tacked straggly Chibi's writing upon the wall when Chibi himself was the only one who could read it.

In noting the way children solve problems in role playing, the teacher gets some idea of the social emotional level of maturity. He also detects gaps in social learning, misconceptions or erroneous ideas. In much the same way that the proper question reveals the intellectual hierarchy, role playing reveals the emotional-social level of operation. In contrast to the sensitivity which this fourth grade felt for Chibi, the isolate, another group thought he should be placed in a special class. This stereotyped solution was agreeable to all the children and revealed to the teacher not only the packaging and transporting of a stereotyped concept to another culture, but also the insensitivity to any human problems outside themselves. Such examples point up the need for opportunity in role playing where tolerance and values are acquired through indirect learning procedures.

Discussion Developed Around Questions

Book discussions are simple ways of reacting to books and provide valuable learning experiences for children. However, they are most effective when the teacher knows and uses discussion techniques effectively. (12) For example, it is important to determine the purpose of the discussion before one can appraise the learning. Is the purpose primarily to develop concepts or is it to understand the importance of attitudes, feelings and values in motivating human behavior? Is the focus clear and stated as a simple question? The question should be an open one so that each child responds with his own interpretation. All contributions are accepted on an equal basis. The teacher refrains from giving any opinion as to quality, but is alert to needs for refocusing, clarifying and extending responses.

Good inquiry explores the personal feelings, attitudes and values of the discussant as compared or contrasted with the feelings, attitudes and values portrayed by the character. Questions such as, "How did you feel about it?" or, "Has anything similar to that ever happened to you?" are examples of questions which bring out the emotional overtones engendered by the story.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the reading consultant works in many ways, with varied and different groups at all levels to bring children and books together. Opportunities for education through literature are abundant in the school curriculum through instruction in literature *per se,* and in the content fields of language arts, reading and social studies.

Good school programs incorporate literature because it offers a way of telescoping and capsuling total human experience for critical review and analysis. It also offers a unique and effective way of educating the emotions through evocation of personal feelings. To educate both the mind and the heart is sublime.

Contrary to the opinions of those who extol content exclusively, effective teachers of literature are involved in the process. This understanding of process, strategy and procedure aids them in facilitating and making personal, the content for the learner. Explicit in-service training in the processes pertinent to education through literature is needed; namely, the techniques and skills pertinent to guiding discussions, managing group work, stimulating critical thinking, and using sociodrama. These skills seem best learned when the teacher, with expert guidance, works through problems and analyzes interaction within his own class.

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Discussion

Dr. Austin: Without doubt the development of critical thinking and reading skills should be a top priority in the 60's. I was delighted, Miss French, that you brought out so carefully ways teachers use to develop these skills in literature. Each teacher should take time to examine the kinds of questions he asks. If he finds he is asking too many of the *who, what, where* and *when* variety, he should shift to *how* and *why* to bring out a higher level of thinking on the part of the children.

It seems it would be wise for every school system to set up an in-service program to help teachers develop critical thinking and reading skills. One successful program began by having the teachers sit down together to discuss books by Stuart Chase and Hiyakawa so as to understand better how they themselves think as adults. A consultant discussed with them the ideas of the cliche. In order to share their long-term study, they sat around a tape recorder as each teacher in the group told how he was working with children to develop critical reading. The tapes were reproduced in a bulletin sent to all teachers.

Dr. Bracken: I agree that the most potent way to encourage better teaching of reading is to raise the level of the types of questions that teachers ask in developing reading materials, including children's literature. May I call to your attention Mildred Letton's five levels of questions which are reported in the University of Chicago *Reading Conference Proceedings* in 1958? In Level I, the pupil makes a factual response which is clearly stated in the selection read. For Level II, the reader must make some reorganization of the author's material. Level III requires the reader to make inferences within a framework relevant to ideas which are not directly stated. In response to Level IV, the reader shows a knowledge of figurative, idiomatic, or picturesque language, connotations, and denotations. Level IV calls on the reader to evaluate ideas in the selection by weighing and comparing them.

Dr. Anderson: What a refreshing question you presented, Miss French, when you quoted the teacher: "What am I going to do with this second grade that already knows how to read?" Also your idea of a workshop shared by kindergarten and first grade teachers is so sensible that I wonder it is new.

With regard to story telling, a device used in Japan will interest American children. Picture storytellers earn a living by going around neighborhoods and, like our Good Humor men, announce their approach by a sound device—two sticks beat together. The children come running, give the storyteller some money and are given a piece of hard candy to eat while the storyteller relates his story and displays a sequence of pictures. By the way, in this country Charles Tuttle and Company have a series of picture sequences for storytelling.

Another device, effectively used in the schools of Paris, is the flannel graph for storytelling. It is unequaled as an aid for the beginning storyteller. The sequence of the story must be well organized, basic action dramatized and the listeners' reaction anticipated in preparing the material.

Miss French's many fine suggestions for follow-up activities which extend the concepts and feelings of reading materials will be appreciated by teachers. I wonder if the halo about the McGuffey Readers is not based on the way those books were used as well as the content. They were written to foster interpretation skills through oral reading. In a rural school the children heard this material used in the grades above and below them as well as that in their own books. It is quite possible that our wide and varied, fact-centered reading materials of today lack the depth of experience needed for true appreciation.

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9. A Comprehensive Literature Program

GREAT stress is given to the teaching of reading in elementary schools, and all of us agree to its vital significance. Less attention is given, however, to providing children with the opportunity to read widely once they have developed fluency, and almost no attention is given to the quality of what children read. Individualized reading promises the time and opportunity for extensive reading but it in no way guarantees the quality of children's reading. Too frequently, teachers and students are impressed with the quantity of books which have been read rather than the quality of the experience in reading the book. It is not the number of books which we have read which is important, but the number of books which we have read that have made a difference in our lives.

Those of us who know and love children's literature realize that there are many such significant books in the juvenile field. Frequently, however, the great books may be hidden from view by the forest of mediocre ones which appear on the market each year. Teachers complain that they do not have time to read and evaluate the some 1500 new titles which represent the yearly output of juvenile literature. Parents, if they buy books at all, buy what is readily available in supermarkets, drug stores, and airports. These books are not our best children's literature—far from it. All that is golden may not glitter. I am convinced we are raising a generation of children that are over-Seussed with Seuss, but how do parents choose? Even the suggestions of the sales persons are no longer available since most of the book sections of department stores utilize self-service. Children's librarians continue to be the greatest source of information and help, but there are far too few of these.

Children themselves have established few guidelines for selecting their books. Frequently they make their choices by the picture on the cover, the title, the amount of conversation or the size of the print. Even the best readers are not discriminating readers. A fifth grader may thoroughly enjoy

Virginia Sorensen's beautifully written story, *Miracles on Maple Hill,* and the next day be equally engrossed in a Nancy Drew mystery.

There is nothing wrong with reading a mediocre book, except as it robs you of the time which you might have spent in reading a better book. Time in a child's life is a precious commodity, particularly since the period of childhood is so limited. Time controls the amount of reading a child does each day, and the length of the period in which he is interested in reading children's books. Both of these aspects of children's time for reading are decreasing. First, children's days are so filled with dancing lessons, French lessons, homework and TV that there is less time for children to read. Secondly, children are growing up faster than they used to and they are beginning to read adult books at an earlier age. As C. S. Lewis so aptly said in *The Last Battle,* we spend all our time rushing to reach the age of eighteen, and the rest of our lives trying to stay that age. The favorite books of one sixth grade, for example, were *Gone With the Wind* and *The Diary of Anne Frank;* most of these students had ceased reading children's books. We seldom catch up with the books which we missed as children, for no adult voluntarily reads Gag's *Millions of Cats* or Gates' *Blue Willow.* If children miss reading or hearing a book at the appropriate age for them, it is generally missed forever. Today, with the number of titles available, it is quite possible for a child to have read widely and never have read a really good book. The quality of children's reading experiences should not be left to chance alone. They should have an opportunity to choose from a wide variety of excellent books; hopefully, they should receive some guidance in making their selections and interpreting their reading.

Literature is one of the few areas of knowledge which receives very little attention in the elementary school. Many teachers consider the teaching of reading and the development of literary appreciation as synonymous. They are not. Some teachers believe that if you provide ample time for free reading, children will automatically develop literary taste. They do not. Naïvely I once assumed that if children were exposed to many books, they would learn to compare and contrast them, to become critical readers. Now I am sure this does not happen. We have no wide-spread literature program in our elementary schools when we compare it with our carefully planned developmental programs in reading, spelling, arithmetic and the social studies. Only a seriously planned literature program from kindergarten through grade twelve can begin to develop the kind of discriminating readers which are needed for our modern world.

Major Purposes of a Comprehensive Literature Program

Developing a love for reading. The development of a love for reading should be a prime purpose of a literature program. Teachers have been more concerned with teaching children *to read* than with the development of children who do read. And yet Russell (5) suggests that if a child has not developed the *habit* of reading by the time he is twelve years old, the chances are pretty good that he will not do so. While there are some studies (4) which indicate that both American children and adults are reading more than they have ever read before, other studies would indicate that our reading habits are woefully inadequate. For example, in one study (6), nearly one-half of the adults in the United States had not read one book during the year. Another one contrasted American reading habits with that of adults in other countries and found that only 17 percent of the Americans had been reading from a book the previous day whereas 55 percent of the English sample had been engaged in this activity (2). This fact leads to a major concern—what are the reading habits of teachers.

A teacher can do much to stimulate an enthusiasm for reading; she can also do a great deal to militate against it. The enthusiasm of the teacher who loves books is always contagious. She will share favorite books with boys and girls and provide time for them to share their favorites with her and with each other. She will not penalize a child for reading a book by requiring him to write a book report on every book he completes. Nor will she demand tangible proof of his reading the book by requiring a project for each one. Why must we always *do* something with every book we've read? There is a place for an occasional mobile or diorama depicting the scenes from a favorite book, but some classrooms become veritable mobile jungles and defeat the very purpose of creating interest in books. Dora V. Smith (7) points out that "The reading interests with which pupils come to school are our opportunity but the reading interests with which they leave school are our responsibility."

Knowledge of our literary heritage. A second major purpose of the literature purpose is acquaintanceship with our literary heritage. Such knowledge begins with literature for children. Common literary allusions have their origin in children's stories and if we have not read those books, the meanings are not clear. Think of such common expressions as:

Mad as a hatter
Sour grapes
Cheshire grin
Your man Friday

Whitewash your fence
Goose that laid the golden egg
Lilliputian
Insatiable curiosity
"Don't count your chicken's before they're hatched"

Acquaintanceship with mythology, folklore and legends is also necessary to the future understanding of many literary allusions. The roots of all literature are derived from the primitive beginnings of the folk tale, fable, myth and legend. It is these stories which show children that the concerns of man today are exactly the same as they were before recorded time. Man is still searching for a satisfactory explanation of his beginnings and his end. Trial and triumph, fear and hope—these are the elements of myth and of life itself.

Children develop common reference points as they share modern day literature also. One sixth grade boy made a telling point in a heated debate on book censorship by suggesting that censorship was the beginning step of giving in to *IT*. All the children who had read *A Wrinkle in Time* recognized his reference and his point. A shared experience with a book had given these children a common set of values and criteria by which to judge a particular act.

Certain modern stories build a foundation and a readiness for some of the books which belong to our classical heritage. Today's children should meet Henry Huggins, Homer Price and Henry Reed, before they are introduced to Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn. A knowledge and appreciation for the evocative beauty of Grahame's *Wind in the Willows* is developed best by building an appreciation for animal fantasy with such books as Lawson's *Rabbit Hill* and Stolz's *Belling the Tiger*. Children who have read George's *My Side of the Mountain* and O'Dell's *The Island of the Blue Dolphin* may be more ready for *Robinson Crusoe*. We must have readiness for what we read as well as readiness for reading itself.

Developing appreciation for good books.—The development of literary appreciation should be a major goal of the elementary school. Bruner (3), in his much discussed book, *The Process of Education,* emphasizes the importance of identifying the basic principles and concepts of each discipline and building upon these in a spiral type curriculum. Children can be taught to appreciate and recognize the elements which constitute fine writing if they have been exposed to good literature from childhood and if these elements of excellence have been discussed. Mere exposure is not enough to develop an understanding of the structure of writing.

Even young children can be helped to appreciate the delineation of the character of *Madeline* or recognize the conflict faced by Mako in Matsuno's *A Pair of Red Clogs* as she deliberately tries to spoil her cracked clogs and deceive her mother. Children in the second and third grades might compare the convincing character development of Yashima's *Crow Boy* with that of the stick-like Bobbsey Twins. Older children can be helped to appreciate the effect of different circumstances and relationships on characters as they contrast the two books by Mary Stolz which present the same story but from different points of view, namely, Stolz's *A Dog on Barkham Street* and *Bully on Barkham Street.* The grim story of the seven Sager children's struggle to reach Oregon in Van der Leoff's *Oregon At Last!* presents authentic background and carefully drawn characters. The enormous responsibility of caring for his six brothers and sisters almost overpowers John's physical and mental strength, and the reader lives every step of that arduous trek with the orphaned children.

Children can be helped to recognize the story that is organic, that is held together with a basic underlying truth. Mere episode or exciting adventure may be characteristic of series books but not of good writing. A comparison of the adventures of any of the Hardy Boys with Sperry's *Call it Courage* would be an enlightening undertaking. Fifth and sixth graders could readily identify the underlying theme of overcoming fear in *Call it Courage;* they might have more difficulty in identifying the inner truth of the Hardy Boys!

For children to develop appreciation for an author's style is more difficult but it can be done. After reading De Jong's *Hurry Home, Candy* and *Along Came a Dog* to one fourth grade, the children identified the author's compassion and deep understanding of animals and people. His ability to create the pathos of the story is established in his opening paragraph of *Hurry Home, Candy.* (Listen to the cadence of that paragraph and compare it with the first five verses of the Book of *John*: "In the beginning was the Word.")

> The dog had no name. For a dog to have a name someone must have him and someone must love him, and a dog must have someone. The dog had no one, and no one had the dog. The dog had only the silent empty countryside of the few houses. The dog had only the crumbs and cleaned bones he could pick up at the few houses. The dog had only himself, so the dog had nothing, and he was afraid. (14b)

This same group of children understood De Jong's use of the symbolism of the broom to represent everything that was terrifying to the dog. The captain, too, had had "brooms in his life" and this the children knew represented his fears, not actual brooms. The ironic symbolism of the gulls winging free over the ship which brings the chained slave, Amos Fortune (Yates), into the port of Boston has been recognized and discussed by middle graders. Children enjoy knowing and being able to identify some of the techniques of fine writing. They come to understand that by means of symbol and imagery, an author can say more than actual words state.

A beginning understanding and feeling for simile and metaphor could be undertaken with younger children. Tresselt's *White Snow Bright Snow* contains excellent samples of each in the following passage:

> Automobiles looked like big fat raisins buried in snowdrifts. Houses crouched together, their windows peeking out from under great white eyebrows. Even the church steeple wore a pointed cap on its top.

The new quiet story by Charlotte Zolotow *The White Marble* includes this interesting simile:

> On a summer evening, when "the heat sat like a feathered bird over the city" John and Pamela met in the park. (40)

Obviously, primary teachers are not going to have lessons on metaphors and similes, I hope! However, they can savor these passages and help children to visualize them or draw them. As children respond to such metaphor as that in Sandburg's poem "The Fog," they are beginning to develop a foundation for literary appreciation. Bruner (3) states " . . . that the foundations of any subject may be taught to anybody at any age in some form."

Developing socially through reading. Personal social growth through reading has always been a major purpose of children's literature. In a planned literature program, teachers will attempt to unite the right book with the right child at the propitious moment. Introducing a child to a book in which a character faces and solves a problem similar to his own may help him to understand his own problem better and to face it with courage and determination. Reading may help children to explore living, "to try on" various roles vicariously and to accept or reject them as they search for their own identity. Some of our overprotected white children may experience the hurts of prejudice for the first time as they read and identify with the main character in Dorothy Sterling's *Mary Jane* which tells of desegragation in our public schools in the South. Louisa Shotwell's new book, *Roosevelt Grady,* is a poignant story of poverty and prejudice, told with a quiet dignity which will be shattering to the sensitive. Some of the feelings of grief and death may be first faced through literature.

How many modern day children have wept at the death of Charlotte, the large grey spider in White's *Charlotte's Web?* Nowhere in children's literature is there a more compassionate statement of the way to help a loved one overcome the pangs of death than the advice given to Juya by his father on what to do for his friend who has just seen Buck's *The Big Wave* engulf his home and family. These books are as real as life itself. They do not preach; they do not patronize. Rather they portray the harsher realities of life in a way which makes their readers more able to face and understand them.

Infusing Children's Literature into the Curriculum

The use of children's literature should permeate every curricular area and all teachers should be committed to this objective. Social studies is greatly enriched through reading books which authentically picture the social problems of our world. Children may develop increased appreciation for the educational dilemma of rising nations as they read such books as Arora's *What Then, Ramon?* and Sommerfelt's *The Road to Agra.* They can hardly imagine a situation in which only one boy in a whole village knows how to read, or where a thirteen-year-old boy determines to walk 300 miles in order to take his seven-year-old sister to a hospital. Geography books may tell of the immensity of the problems of these nations, but these literary books focus upon the lives of one or two individuals and throw the light of understanding upon the many. History, too, may gain a new perspective through the re-creation of a period and events in historical fiction or biography. Children may be helped to understand that history is always someone's interpretation, as they read Tunis's *Silence Over Dunkerque.* For in this story the author had the courage to admit that our men were sometimes less than brave in their desperate struggle to survive. Children who read books which present different points of view will have a better understanding of their historical heritage than the child who is limited to a single textbook approach. For historical fiction clothes the bare bones of historical fact and makes it come alive. Periods remote in time and lace such as England in the days of the Romans and Saxons come alive through the superb writing of Rosemary Sutcliff. Harry Behn's hauntingly beautiful story, *The Faraway Lurs,* makes the people of the Bronze Age believable and authentic.

The worlds of archeology, anthropology, medicine, chemistry, physics and others have all been presented in children's trade books which enrich the study of elementary school science. The most recent information in these fields can be found in such books, for single titles can be revised much more readily than can a text series or a set of encyclopedias. The amazing flood of informational books is a recent phenomenon in the field of children's literature. Outstanding examples of some of the best of these books include De Borhegyi's *Shops, Shoals and Amphoras,* the young people's edition of Carson's *The Sea Around Us* and Anne Terry White's *Lost Worlds.*

The hearing of much good literature affects the quality of children's writing and vocabulary growth. Creative writing may frequently grow out of children's personal reading. Children may wish to write further adventures of a particular storybook character; or they may create their own story based upon a certain theme in literature, such as Kipling's *Just So Stories.* We have seen the responses which children have made to Mary O'Neill's lovely color poems presented in *Hailstones and Halibut Bones.* Recent research in the development of creativity has demonstrated that we should look at all the possibilities and dimensions of a particular object or event. The poems of Myra Cohn Livingston in *See What I Found* explore many dimensions of such familiar objects as a feather, a rubber band, a key and many more. Young children may be inspired to look at their world in a new way after they have heard these poems.

The Need for a Comprehensive Literature Program. At the beginning of each quarter I ask the elementary education majors in my class of children's literature to list the books which they remember reading as children. Most of them look at me in dismay and then slowly push away the cobwebbed memories of required reading in both college and high school to reveal a pitifully inadequate knowledge of the literature for children. Their lists usually contain Mother Goose rhymes, stories by Dr. Seuss, frequently characters from well-known basic readers, The Bobbsey Twins, Nancy Drew mysteries, Clara Barton stories, sometimes *Little Women,* and *The Little House* books by Laura Ingalls Wilder. Occasionally, one or two students will have very extensive lists that include such well-known classics as *Peter Rabbit, Winnie the Pooh, Peter Pan,* all of the Alcott stories, and modern classics such as McCloskey's *Homer Price,* Brink's *Caddie Woodlawn,* White's *Charlotte's Web,* Lawson's *Rabbit Hill* and many others. Almost invariably, the students who have a rich background in children's literature attribute their knowledge to their family's interest in reading and love for books. Schools appear to have played a relatively insignificant role in leading children into the world of books.

The Requirements of a Planned Program. Obviously, such a comprehensive literature program would make many demands upon teachers, their time and the school program. Only as teachers are committed to the value of literature in children's lives will they give serious consideration to such purposes. They will have to know and love books more than the majority of our teachers do now. Hopefully, the quality of both pre-service and in-service courses in children's literature will be improved. Graduate courses in literature for children need to be offered to the teachers who have not had a course in this area for some twenty years. Teachers should be encouraged to do voluntary reading of children's books and then share their favorites with their colleagues. Surely every teacher could read a minimum of one new children's book a month. Shared with two other teachers at the same grade level, this would add some 27 to 30 new books a year to each one's basic knowledge of the field.

We shall have to have many more books, and many better books than are currently available in the majority of our schools. I predict that the growth of school libraries in the next ten years will be tremendous. Every school needs a central school library, and every classroom needs a small changing group of books immediately available. I am appalled at the money we have spent on school cafeterias, lighted football fields, and intercommunication systems when two-thirds of our elementary schools do not have libraries. The 1960 ***Standards for School Library Programs*** (1) are not unrealistic and hopefully may lead the way to school libraries for all.

Such a comprehensive literature program as has been suggested here will take time—time for children to read and share books and for the teacher to share books with them. Some schools are already providing the time for such activities, but there must also be purposive planning of these activities. Is there a group of books which we feel elementary students should not miss? Could the teachers in one building or system develop such a working list, from which they could select books to read aloud in the story hour, or books to discuss with their children? Could teachers agree on some basic elements of fine writing, some criteria by which books may be evaluated? Instead of the usual free reading period, teachers could talk with children about their reading, help them evaluate the unique aspects about their books, and make suggestions for future choices. What books will be useful in other curricular areas and how can they be used to their best advantage? These and other questions will need to be resolved as teachers cooperate in bringing children and books together through a comprehensive literature program.

Each and everyone of you here love children's literature or you would not be here—but there are too few of us. How can we extend our influence so that the children in schools today will not become the teachers of tomorrow with little or no background in children's literature?

I am reminded of that challenging statement in *What Then, Ramon* when Ramon, the little Indian boy who is the only child in his village that knows how to read talks with his friend, the American lady, and tells her that when he grows up, he just wants to read and read and read. And his friend waits a moment and then says, "And what then, Ramon?" To each of you who have attended this meeting, I can only say, *"And what, now?"*

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(*Note: Alphabetized listing of children's books appears in the appendix.*)

DISCUSSION

DR. AUSTIN: Children who are to become better readers and to enjoy literature must read widely. Unless they do, they cannot learn to appreciate what is good and what is mediocre in literature. To do this, they must be exposed to a great variety of literature and then discuss the elements which make literature of high quality. The teacher must locate and present books to children, and she must not only seek the objectives that Dr. Huck outlined so well but she must also enjoy books.

When C. S. Lewis was asked why he wrote for children, he said that sometimes an author at a particular moment finds that not only fantasy but *fantasy for children* is exactly the right form for what he wants to say. He also once said that to recapture his poignant feeling about fall, he would return to reading Beatrix Potter's *Squirrel Nutkin.*

DR. BRACKEN: I would hope that the statement that almost no attention is given to the quality of what children read is not true. Perhaps I'm a victim of wishful thinking, but I recall the hundreds of teachers and librarians and professors of children's literature and parents and writers and editors—a host of people devoting their lives to the improvement of taste in reading.

We do have certain supplementary readers or reading series which attempt sequential programs; but the carefully planned, completely sequential literature program in actual use from grade 1 through grade 12 is something to be developed in the future.

Let's underscore the sentence: "It's not the number of books we have read that is important, but the number of books we have read that have made a difference in our lives." Specialists in reading and literature emphasize over and over again the importance of teaching boys and girls not merely the mechanics of reading but the significance of the materials they read, the importance of guiding their reactions so that as a result of their reading these youngsters become different people. For instance, children should be moved by Marguerite de Angeli's *Door in the Wall* wherein paralyzed Roger learns from Brother Luke: "Thou has only to follow the wall far enough, and there will be a door in it."

DR. ANDERSON: Dickens in *The Tale of Two Cities* starts with the sentence: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." Maybe that sentence describes the children's literature situation in our country today. We are faced with a wide choice of material, but lack wisdom to use it wisely. If it is true that adults are not reading after all the effort of their teachers to expose them to the benefits of literature, it may be that we need to look at what we are attempting to do. Often teachers impose a literary culture upon the children in their charge in a form of ancestral worship.

Sometimes in our efforts to pass on this literary heritage, we have ignored cultural differences. In San Diego we have talked a great deal about the culturally deprived and said we must do something about the children of Spanish, Mexican and Indian extraction. Recently we were visited by a group of their leaders who, in their very courteous and gentlemannered way, pointed out that it was not a matter of cultural deprivation. Their people had been in our area long before the English culture,that they had their own folklore and folk literature. Our problem may well be the cultural unawarenes of those attempting to do something for these people in a literary way.

Dr. Northrop in political science maintains that the differences among the world's people that matter are not political but cultural. For him, the just and peaceful world to which we look forward is one of cultural pluralism, restrained by agreement to respect cultures other than one's own. We must, in children's literature, recognize the cultural levels already existing in our children and start there to lead them on.

HELEN HUUS

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10. Interpreting Research in Children's Literature

LEARNING of any sort is a singularly individual activity. Regardless of the peculiarities of environment, ability, interest or other factors, each persons ultimately must learn for himself. This he does through experiences he has, and what he finds in books forms a large part of his vicarious experiences. Therefore, bringing children and books together assumes educational importance, and knowing what research has shown can aid in improving the selection and use of books. The research summarized here, while by no means exhaustive, does contain several of the studies dealing with various aspects of children's literature.

The importance of reading as a recreational pursuit of children has been studied over the years. Prior to 1925, there was a rapid increase in reading in the later elementary grades, according to Gray (32), and the average number of books read independently was from ten to twenty a year, with magazine reading being "almost universal" above the fifth grade. Cutright (18) found that the median percentage of children holding library cards increased each year from grades three to six and was directly related to distance from the library, while Hunnicutt (40) concluded that the "activity program" in New York City schools had a favorable effect on the amount and kinds of reading children did.

As a part of the New York Regents' Inquiry, children's diaries of books and magazines read during a three-week period were analyzed, and a test was given which showed that their relative knowledge was less in literature than in any other major elementary field. This indicated the need to promote reading "natural to their particular stage of development" and "suited to their broadening of interest and deepening of experience." (77, p. 255)

McCullough (57) asked children in three areas of Oakland, California, to keep a "log" of their out-of-school activities for a week. Their records showed recreation, work, and television as the most popular. Only 25 to 40 per cent reported reading books; 7 to 12 per cent, newspapers; and 5 to 10 per cent, magazines. McCullough emphasized that "home influences were potent in establishing the reading habit." Rice (68) found a direct relation between talent and interest in the academic areas of reading and social studies in grades four to six, which would be reflected in the amount they read.

In a survey of 270 communities, Shores (76) and Rudman (70) found that children want to know about science, ethics and values, that their questions regarding personal problems and vocations increase with age and development, and that parents know better than teachers what children want to read about.

These few studies indicate that there is still need for promoting reading and for relating reading to the real concerns of children. The bulk of research in children's literature, however, falls naturally into five categories, relating to: (1) reading preferences, (2) poetry, (3) mass media, (4) reading materials and (5) the effects of reading.

Reading Preferences

Preferences for stories and other types of reading material have been studied with a view to understanding what children's interests really are. Shane (74) points out that children are "interested" when they "recognize something of value to them in what they are learning" and can identify it with their personal well-being; Harris (34) states that interest is a "preoccupation with an activity when the child is free to choose"; and one dictionary defines it as "a feeling of wanting to know, see, do, own, share in, or take part in." (3) In all of these, there is the element of self-involvement without pressure from without, a spontaneous acceptance and an inner recognition of the appropriate.

Studies of interests.—Interests of children have been inferred by noting objects utilized, time spent, enjoyment evidenced or repetition of activities. Interests in reading have been studied by questionnaires to children or adults, by interviews, by analyzing library statistics and "wear and tear" on books and by observation and experimentation. Some interesting facts can be noted as studies are reviewed chronologically. In 1899, Vostrovsky (88) found that juvenile stories, general literature and fiction were the most popular types of reading material and that Louisa M. Alcott was the only author popular with both boys and girls. Subsequent studies by Jordan (46), Terman and Lima (83), Sister M. Celestine (16), Lazar (50) and Rankin (66) have shown consistent results for common aspects studied. In general for these studies, the following conclusions hold: (1) interests of children vary with age and grade level; (2) few differences between the interests of boys and girls are apparent before age nine; (3) notable differences in the interests of boys and girls appear between ages ten and thirteen, especially at age twelve; (4) girls read more than boys, but boys have a wider interest range and read a greater variety of materials; (5) adult fiction of a romantic type has an earlier interest for girls than for boys; (6) boys like chiefly adventure and girls like fiction, but mystery stories appeal to both; and (7) boys seldom show preference for a "girl's" book, but girls will read boys' books to a greater degree.

The most comprehensive study of children's interests since World War II is that by Norvell (63), who obtained reports from more than 24,000 children, grades three through eight, in New York State regarding 1576 literary selections. His results are similar and indicate that sex differences are evidenced early, that boys prefer prose and girls poetry, and that all children like adventure and action, human characters, animals and patriotism, but not always in that order. Boys prefer physical struggle, humor, courage and heroism, while girls like home and school, romantic love, sentiment, mystery and the supernatural.

The surprising fact, perhaps, is that the interests of children have remained so stable in such a rapidly changing society. Studies of young children's interests reported by Cappa (13) and Gunderson (33) show, respectively, that kindergarten children prefer slightly fanciful stories to real, but not "unrealistic nonsense," and that seven-year-olds still like "humor, then excitement, suspense, adventure, an element of magic or fancy and a satisfying ending in which justice triumphs." Droney's study (22) found that boys do not choose stories with a girl's name in the title and that they like "animals, out-of-doors, adventure, exploration and heroes," whereas girls like "stories which suggested the imaginative, the emotional, and homelife and familiar experiences." (p. 276) Neither like meaningless, strange or foreign words in titles. Studies by Jefferson (44), Young (63) and Vinton (87) also are consistent with previous findings.

Recent studies show that there is a shifting "down" to younger ages of some interests formerly held by older children. For example, McAulay (53, 54, 55) conducted a study whereby children's conversations were recorded on tape and analyzed to identify social studies interests. He found that these centered on current problems, that topics usually studied in social studies classes "underestimate the interest and information children have received from TV, radio, movies, and travel," and that interest can move from the community to the world scene in first grade as easily as sixth. (p. 409)

Before completing this section, mention must be made of the summaries by Davis (19) and by Witty and his associates (96, 97, 98). Davis identifies trends from a study of approximately 150 investigations since 1935, and points out how children's interests develop from simple and active to complex and social, from fancy to fact, from active adventure, stereotyped plot and little conversation to the romantic "adult" story with restrained action, less extreme characters and conversation replacing action. The summaries by Witty, *et al.,* present a chronological review of important studies from which trends and current status can be identified and which serve as a ready source for obtaining an overview of research.

Factors affecting preferences.—Studies which include factors that affect children's choices of reading material point to the influence of parents and teachers in this regard. Jefferson (44), for example, concluded that parents can estimate their children's likes and dislikes quite well, but that they tend to overestimate "travel" and underestimate "mystery and detective," "humor" and "love and romance" (for girls).

The earliest study concerning the importance of the teacher in influencing children's choices in reading is that reported by Wightman (94). In nearly every class he found that children preferred the same book that the teacher was enthusiastic about, and that in 20 individual cases where children were at variance, there was a parent or some friend who had sparked the child's interest. Likewise, in California, Cappa (11) found that kindergarten children liked the books read most frequently by the teacher and that their "most noted" responses following the reading of a story by the teacher were a desire to look at the book and to have the story told or read again.

When teachers wield such influence, their own literary background becomes of particular importance. The study by Thompson (84), though not a recent one, came to the conclusion that the teachers in her sample lacked the literary background necessary for their profession. Young (104) in a more recent study of California teacher education institutions, found that "meager consideration" was given to children's literature in the preparation of elementary school teachers. Subsequently, Ward (89) reported the favorite children's books chosen by her students in Children's Literature at Los Angeles State College and concluded that students were discriminative in their choices.

Other studies have focused on the relation between personal traits, abilities and skills of children and their preferences in reading. Garrison and Thomas (28) found a positive but low correlation between vocabulary and factors in the appreciation of literature, such as discovery of theme, reader participation and sensory imagery. This indicates that vocabulary knowledge does have some importance in literary appreciation. Looby (52) found that pupils understood only slightly more than three-fifths of the words and phrases read in the literature lesson and were not conscious of acquiring a wrong meaning from context.

As in most academic areas, intelligence has its effect on reading in that brighter students tend to read three to four times as many books as the average (19), have a wider range of interests, read material of superior quality and reach their maximum peak at an earlier age—eight or nine rather than age thirteen. Looby found a high correlation between mental age and the understanding of words and phrases and between reading and unit (literary) test scores.

Lazar (50) found a relation between socioeconomic status and the books and magazines in the home, but Vandament and Thalman (86) found no significant differences between the reading preferences of children from varying socioeconomic backgrounds. While their results were limited, they were compatible with the findings of child psychology.

In general, the factor most important in children's preferences, according to the studies reviewed, seems to be the adults within the environment. If this is the case, the challenge to parents and teachers is clear. Unfortunately, no studies in this group dealt with the availability of materials, and certainly this must be taken into consideration when preferences are interpreted.

Developing literary appreciation.—As early as 1927, Rasche (67) lamented that teachers and librarians were in general devoting most of their efforts to getting children to read rather than attempting to improve their reading tastes. A canvass of the literature since that time leads to the same conclusion now, for there has been no substantial research on the topic since that of Broening in 1929 (9). Her study included the presentation of lessons in the elements of literary appreciation to school children in Baltimore and Philadelphia. At the end of the experimental period, she concluded that appreciation can be developed by good teaching, good materials, and a spontaneous, competent teacher.

A more limited study by Mason (59), while carried out in grades two to six, was most successful in the fourth grade. These children visited the library and learned how to use it during Book Week, then gave an assembly program on the topic. Their library withdrawals of "desirable books" increased steadily throughout the remainder of the year, and the public librarian reported that the group used the library more intelligently than any other comparable group in the city. Putnam (65) also reported an activity where the teacher prepared careful book introductions to entice children to read non-fiction and set up a card file containing children's questions with suggestions of sources for finding the answers. A subsequent check revealed "over ⅓ of the class" reading non-fiction books during a free reading period.

Through a modified "case-study" approach, Fox (26) located reading level, interests, traits and problems of 21 children, then promoted improvement where needed. Through workbook lessons, free reading and sharing, listening to the teacher read aloud and visiting the library, children improved the quality of their recreational reading, and one child went from "Big Little Books" and comics to *Little Men*. The study illustrated how good books can drive out the undesirable, and how children can be led gradually toward discrimination in choice.

A questionnaire survey by Smith (79) resulted in replies from 217 teachers who indicated that they considered "mental set or attitude of the learner" as the most important factor in learning to appreciate literature. Next was the learner's ability to "perceive a goal or objective," and third in importance was "statements about the material to be appreciated." Also significant were "comprehension of meaning," the "learner's ability to get word pictures" and the "emotional attitude associated with his experience." Emphasis on the technicalities of literary craftsmanship was considered not important. Then why should so much technical detail be discussed in literature courses?

Three studies approached the development of appreciation through a unified arts approach. Bishop (4) planned a course composed of a series of 36 unified lessons which utilized art, music and literature, such as Rosa Bonheur's "The Blacksmith," Verdi's "The Anvil Chorus" and Longfellow's "The Village Blacksmith." Waymack (90) asked pupils their opinion of pictures, then presented lessons on technical aspects of art, after which they chose a picture for their room. The "before" and "after" reports were not "highly significant," but six new aspects were listed by pupils following the lessons. Bowes, *et al.,* (8) related musical records to the mood or theme of favorite stories, which resulted, according to the report, in a deeper appreciation of both arts. A more detailed account of these and other studies is contained in the summary by Huus (42) of the development of tastes in literature.

Poetry

In order to call attention to the status of poetry teaching, those studies dealing with poetry are presented in a separate section.

Children's choices of poetry.—The appeal of poems found in textbooks was compared with non-textbook poems in grades one to three by Eckert (23), who found that adult ideas do not coincide with those of children, and that children enjoy poems form non-text sources more than those in the textbooks. From this she concluded that children can discriminate, for the non-text sources were of high quality. Avegno (1) conducted a study on a much larger scale, involving 48 teachers and 1200 children in eight New York City schools. Each day teachers read poems to the children, who rated them on a 5-point scale. The results showed a positive relationship between the poetry preferences of these children as compared with those in a previous study by Mackintosh in 1932. Some of the elements liked in poetry were rhyme, emotional tone, vocabulary, story and descriptions; disliked features were no rhyme, no story, no action, too long or too short, boring or babyish. Because of the number of poems available, Avegno makes a plea for teachers to find poems that do appeal to children.

Like book preference, poetry preference is influenced by the adults in the child's environment. Coast (17) found that following a week of emphasis on poetry, children's choices, especially in grade one, overlapped the teacher's choices of poems they "most enjoyed teaching," and that the teacher's influence was "even more powerful than we realize." Dovey (21) found in a study with preschool children that a favorable home background served as a foundation and that children from such homes showed greater interest than others in poetry. However, this did not increase their ability to discriminate initially between good poetry and poor, though intelligence did appear to be a factor.

Weekes (91) studied the effect of figurative language, involved sentence structure, and actual experience as factors of meaning that affect children's choices of poetry. She found that these *are* difficulties for sixth grade children, that they do obscure meaning and may foster a dislike for poetry if not taken into consideration.

Methods of teaching poetry.—Three studies that deal with methods of teaching poetry were conducted by Hosic (39), Frawley (27), and Gillett (29). Hosic found the "whole" method superior to the "part" method, and recommended that the idea of a poem be presented in order for pupils to relate their own experience to the poem as a whole. Frawley tried five methods for memorization and found that the "required" methods were superior for exact recollection and total comprehension, while the "activity" methods were superior as preparation for tests requiring understanding and knowledge and for permanent use. In the third study, Gillett presented two half-hour poetry lessons a week. She found that children can become interested in poetry and that proper techniques do aid in increasing interest. Much more needs to be done, however, in determining which methods are superior for teaching poetry in the schools.

Studies that deal with the ability to judge poetry are few; the only one that will be mentioned here is that by Speer (80). He conducted a rather elaborate study of 238 pupils in sixth grade in order to measure certain appreciative functions. He came to the conclusion that appreciative learning is specific and must be taught in that manner.

A review of the dates of studies cited here will emphasize the dearth of current research in regard to the teaching or analysis of poetry and to methods of discrimination. The very personal nature of poetry's emotional appeal, its specific interest value for each individual, and its relation to intangibles such as attitudes, values, and aspirations, complicate the problem of conducting research studies of merit.

Mass Media

The interests, preferences and patterns of children's reading are influenced by their attraction to magazines and newspapers, comics and television.

Magazines and newspapers.—The few studies of periodical reading by children in grades four to six have been ably summarized by Sister M. Immaculata Kramer (48, 49). These show that boys and girls liked the same qualities here as they did in books. Boys preferred adventure and science, and magazines like the *American Boy* and *Popular Science,* while girls preferred women's arts, adult fiction, and adventure, as found in *Ladies Home Journal, Pictorial Review,* and *St. Nicholas.* Only in the Norris study (49) were juvenile magazines reported popular, and then with a group who were in a platoon school with a library.

In an attempt to improve children's tastes in magazine reading, Erickson (24) conducted a project with sixth graders where activities with desirable magazines were promoted. At the end of the study she found that *Child Life* headed the preferred list, followed by *St. Nicholas, Ameri-*

can Boy and *Boy's Life*.

Later studies summarized by Witty (97) report that boys read more magazines than girls and that periodicals are popular in every grade above the second. One study (97) in five Chicago elementary schools found that *Life* and *Look* were the two most popular for both boys and girls, with *Boy's Life* and *American Girl* in third place, respectively.

A recent report of children's newspaper reading by Johnson (45) showed that 24 per cent of the 564 children read the newspaper regularly, 70 per cent "sometimes," and only 6 per cent not at all. "Funnies" were best liked, followed by "news" and "sports," and social studies and reading were the two school subjects aided most. Pupils reported only "incidental experience with contrasting reports." These representative studies show the trend, but the need for additional research in this area is obvious.

Comics—According to Witty and Sizemore (100, 101, 102), comics were first placed on the newsstands in 1934, but did not really become full-fledged until *Superman* came on the scene in 1938. Sterling North's famous editorial entitled, "A National Disgrace—And a Challenge to Parents," appeared in the *Chicago Daily News* on May 8, 1940, and aroused the nation. From then on, the arguments have continued, but more opinion than fact has been circulated. Some studies, like those of Hill (37), who analyzed the vocabulary of favorite comics, Strang (82), who interviewed children to find elements of appeal, and Denecke (20), who placed "approved" comics in the room, then created a demand for better comics by helping children evaluate the ones they brought, have attempted to find the reasons behind this phenomenon. Other reports deal with the number read per week, the millions circulated per month, and the favorite titles of boys and girls. Carr (14, 15) suggested a list of children's books containing comparable elements of appeal as a substitute for the comics, and The Greater Cincinnati Committee on Evaluation of Comic Books has prepared lists over the years, classifying comics on four levels of quality. (102)

The most comprehensive review of research on comics, however, has been made by Witty and Sizemore (100, 101, 102), who conclude that over 90 per cent of boys and girls between ages eight and thirteen read comics regularly, with peak years in grades four to six; that one-fourth or more of the comics show violence, hate, and aggression as the *normal* way of life; that children need guidance in discriminating; and that education should capitalize on the method.

The cycles come and go, and comic books, like other flurries before them, seem now to be "settling down" in the perspective of our society. A recent limited study by Blakely (5) showed children still are reading an average of four per week, with the "funny" type predominating. But certainly the charge to teachers is clear—combat comics by substituting some of the wonderful children's books of today.

Television.—Witty's annual summaries of television viewing in the Chicago area are well known, and now he and Kinsella (99) report the trends from 1949 to 1962. The percentage of homes having sets has risen from 43 per cent in 1949 to 99 per cent, but the average weekly hours of viewing by elementary school children has remained relatively stable at 21 hours, with a current peak of 25. A study by Lazarus (51) is consistent, with 20 hours as the median for his group. However, he emphasized that TV had not forced out reading. Hurley (41) gives ways in which school groups can use TV for their own purposes: by suggesting books to follow up a TV program, by recommending good programs, by using TV as a guide for summer reading, or as Kern City, California, has done, by pursuading the weather forecaster to use children's books on weather and sportscasters to use children's sports books on their programs. Hazard (36) described how "ladders of taste" can be built by having children compare various editions of a book with the TV production, and Huus (43) has shown how one TV program can serve as a springboard to further reading.

The question of the effect of television viewing continues to be of concern. After studying the TV habits of 352 children in grades four to seven, Perrodin (64) concluded that those who view TV the least have a preference for "non-democratic" behavior. This could mean that extremes of viewing may be symptomatic, whereas an ordinary amount becomes valueless as a factor in selecting children who have problems and those who do not. Certainly the medium holds much promise for those who can and will discriminate among its offerings; it forms a readily accessible vehicle for motivation and education; and it extends horizons through information and cultural experience.

Materials of Reading

While children's books in America are among the most beautiful in the world, they would be less than useful if they did not appeal to the children for whom they are made.

Preferences for illustrations.—Studies of children's reactions to various aspects of art have been made by using different methods. Bamberger (2) reads parts of a favorite story to primary grade children, then lets them choose one of five books from which to finish it. On the basis of their choices, she found that optimum size was 7½ x 5½ x 1", that wide margins were pleasing, that colors preferred were blue, red, yellow, with older children liking the softer tones, that at least 25 per cent of the book should be composed of illustrations and that the pictures should contain humor and action and tell a story.

Miller (60) used five subjects or topics, each in seven illustrative techniques, to determine the preferences of primary children. Each topic was presented to the children, and on the basis of their choices, Miller reported that they liked first, the full-color picture, then red, photographs and blue, although there were variations with age, grade, and I.Q.

Malter (58) compared eight studies, from 1922 to 1936, regarding children's art preferences. On the basis of his review, he concluded that children like saturated color, storytelling qualities, humor, a large central group, and objects they can connect with their previous experiences. Silhouettes were "very unpopular," and "real" was preferred to "conventionalized" style. The findings of a subsequent study by Rudisill (69) are consistent, although she used only realistic pictures.

Two studies concentrated on the content or theme of the illustrations. One by Whipple (93) sought to appraise the narrative interest appeal by presenting children with "dummy" booklets containing only illustrations, then soliciting their preference for reading three of the stories they had seen illustrated. On the basis of reports from 150 pupils, she found that children liked no more than four illustrations and that they preferred large to small pictures. Four colors was most popular; a center of interest had greater appeal than none; storytelling action was liked; and boys preferred "war," "sea and ships," "means of travel," and "Indians" as themes, while girls liked "holidays" and "marionettes."

The other study, by Bloomer (6), used illustrations showing positive, negative and neutral tension in three styles of drawing. Children told which they liked best and least, and the results indicated they preferred color and positive tension, but chose to write about line drawings and negative tension. Their story content was more affected by style of picture than by theme. The conclusions drawn were that stimulating qualities of line and negative tension were a better basis for choosing illustrative style than was color, but that the latter is better for stimulating fantasy.

Studies generally agree on the type and content of illustrations children prefer. These results should be kept in mind when books for children's collections are evaluated and selected.

Analysis of content.—In the last few years, increasing attention has been paid to the content of children's reading material, and in an article entitled, "Children's Literature: Form or Formula?" Smith (78) analyzed several children's books in order to define the distinct pattern as contrasted to repetition of a pattern, such as found in "big-and-little-dog" books and "animal-who-goes-back-to-the-wilds" books. He emphasized the dominant form of structure as design—the constant recurrence of motif or action balanced against action; the departure from the expected, as whimsey and surprise; the dominant characteristic of movement and change; and the spirit of order and strength, which can also be a limitation because it lacks suspense.

The following year, Browman and Templin (10) analyzed 50 stories, 25 from a Minneapolis Public Library list of 1927-29 and 25 from a similar list for 1952-55, to see whether or not children's books "reflect the environment in which they were recommended." Type of story, type of main character, behavior presented and consequence of behavior were items considered. Early books emphasized manners, morals and cleanliness; later ones put emphasis on brotherhood, personal frustration and social problems. Rewards shifted from material and social to social and material. The authors concluded that the books do reflect the times, and that later books contain more main characters, more activity, more social rewards, more adults and less differential treatment of boys and girls than the earlier books.

Fisher (25) analyzed 43 children's books and recorded and categorized every reference to family life. She found realism in parent-child relationships, enough to provide guidance in democratic family life and to use as a source for family-life or parent and teacher education.

McConnell (56) analyzed 24 biographies to determine the "environment and personality factors contributing to the achievements" of the subject. By analyzing the books according to 16 categories set up after reading six books, the investigator found there was a general thread but wide variety among the persons as individuals. They had more "approved" than "disapproved" traits and recognized and tried to overcome their shortcomings. They were most greatly influenced by individuality, work, attitudes, idealism and the conditions of time, locale, family, friends and people in general.

The third report of content analysis deals with the treatment of characters in popular children's fiction. The study was made by Shepard (75), who analyzed 16 books and categorized the characters according to "a mythical, but verifiable cultural ideal of the United States in the mid-twentieth century." He found "favorable" characters to have fewer "unfavorable" characteristics than the reverse and noted that rarely is the religion of the characters identified. He raised an important question regarding values accepted in recommending books for children and wondered whether children should have a controlled environment that is different from reality. In a rebuttal, Stoer (81) criticized Shepard for basing his analysis on only 16 books, then cites heroes and heroines of other books that might have been more representative.

While the method of selecting books for content analysis may be open to question, the procedure could be interpreted to mean a renewed interest in ferreting out the depth of meaning in children's books; but on the other hand, it could also mean that once a formula has been determined, the presses will grind out the duplicates.

Judging quality.—Determining the quality of children's books becomes important as each new book is made available. Helping individuals, whether they be children or adults, learning how to evaluate is not an easy task, for taste and judgment are inextricably interwoven into one's personal standards and values.

A few studies have tried to develop criteria for judging, including those by Uhl (85) and Graves (30). Uhl asked teachers to report their degree of success in teaching 50 selections, and pupils to report their "like" or "dislike" for each selection. On the basis of his results, he concluded that appropriate standards for judging could be set up for each grade. Graves attempted to measure literary merit and personal enjoyment by devising a 10-point scale similar to the Winnetka Graded Book List and asking librarians to use it in judging books. They reported a variation between the literary merit and enjoyment as measured in this manner; and from their results, Graves concluded that the scale was useful for book selection.

Havens (35) reported an evaluation based on authoritative opinion and children's responses to selected literature for the purpose of formulating a list of stories and poems for kindergarten children. William, Winter and Ward (95) tried to determine the appreciation of prose and poetry and compare it with appreciation for art and music. Through taking tests and rating literary selections against an ideal, the capacity of an individual to discriminate is discernible, they found, and at a much earlier age than generally assumed. The bipolar factor, where one prefers classical writers and objective style, or romantic style and subjective writing, showed a small positive relationship between types of preference in all three aesthetic arts. In connection with her study, Broening (9) also devised measures of literary appreciation, using the interest studies and her own background in selecting the content.

All of these attempts to help children judge the quality of material were made in the two decades of the 'twenties and the 'thirties. A new emphasis and a fresh approach in the light of intervening knowledge is needed so that criteria can be developed in keeping with current emphases and in light of contemporary problems.

The Effect of Reading

Studies of the effect of reading are of relatively recent development. The studies and reports included here have all been made since 1948 and have no doubt resulted, in part at least, from the experiences with bibliotherapy during World War II.

Wentzel (92) evaluated eight recent books according to three sets of values: democratic, understanding own problems, and understanding minority problems, and concluded that literature can contribute to children's socialization. Gray (31) recommended the use of bibliotherapy in the classroom, for through identification with the story characters the child may be able to "discover how others face and solve existing problems." Newell (61) pointed out some of the same contributions of bibliotherapy, and Russell (71) puts forth the following seven hypotheses relating to the reader's identification:

1. A child identifies most easily with a character that resembles himself.
2. For a child, identification is an active process.
3. After approximately three years of age, the child can distinguish between reality and the fantasy of identification.
4. Identification may help in the socialization of the child.
5. Identification may have mental health values for the child.
6. Identification with a *group* may be valuable for the child.
7. Educational aims suggest that sometimes the child should identify himself with worthy causes.

And Russell and Shrodes (72, 73) present a theory relative to the use of books in influencing total development and personality. They glean from previous research and authoritative writing pertinent information and relate it to their construct. The result forms a point of departure for further study in this field.

Homze (38) reviewed a few of the research studies on adult bibliotherapy, defined self-concept and indicated how the ability to identify with reality will give a reader a model from books regarding characters, family life and solutions for problems. Bovyer (7) conducted a study to determine the effect on children's knowledge of the concept of sportsmanship from hearing twelve short sports stories read by the teacher without any discussion. The results showed there was not much change, and Bovyer concluded that one reading was not enough and that pupils needed the guidance offered by discussion.

Conclusion

This report has synthesized, in brief, material from several of the classic studies of children's interests and preferences for reading, the development of appreciation and tastes, the relation of mass media, and the effect of reading. Certain observations can be made even from this limited survey:

1. There is a resurgence of interest in improving the quality of the material children read and of what is made available to them.
2. The effect of television on the interests and vocabulary of children is beginning to be evident in the research studies.
3. The problem of exactly how such intangibles as interest, taste, and appreciation develop remains, and developmental levels have not yet been experimentally defined.
4. The specific contribution of environment has not been determined.
5. The problem of devising adequate research tools and techniques to ferret out the information needed for research in this field is paramount.

But as those interested in bringing children and books together put into practice the information already obtained through research and experimentation and as research workers continue to push forward the horizons even more, then will the children have books that are beautiful, books that appeal and books that satisfy. Then will those who have made this possible bask in the reflected glow from the children who have found such books, and for them this will be reward enough!

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Discussion

Dr. Anderson: Dr. Huus has summarized a great amount of material that I didn't know existed. It is disturbing, in an area as broad as children's literature, that so little money has been available for research. Contrast the funds available to Land Grant colleges for research on grass feeds and fattening pigs. Think of the limited funds for individuals who have done the research just reviewed. These people were sincerely motivated and felt a real problem.

We must recognize the limitations due to the studies being done under the stress of getting a Master's or Doctor's degree—short period of time, limited materials. I am also suspicious of research that is simply the result of a survey of practice, as when children are given the choice of candy, hamburger, cake or bananas and frequency of mention causes an investigator to conclude that bananas are the most popular food for third-graders. Probably too few were asked to have the number representative; and children may like all four foods almost equally well. However, surveys in literature do give strong indications of directions to go. Note, for instance, the early materials on bibliography. I suspect that literature for disturbed boys, as we mentioned yesterday, does not yet exist, and writers should be aware of the opportunity to create such books.

Some research at my college on books the children like to read indicates that the book owned by a child is usually listed as his favorite. So, with the cooperation of parents, we have arranged that a birthday book be contributed to a child's class and to the school library. A list of recommended books that cost from 49 cents to 5 dollars is made available; a book plate identifies the donor of such books; and there are indications that the children's resultant identification with the library has favorably influenced their attitude toward reading.

The International Paper Company will send 100 free copies of "The Reading Explosion" for use with groups such as PTA. It shows that from 1940 to 1960, our population has increased 37 per cent, but the number of books, 445 per cent. In 1940, an American, on the average, bought one book a year; today it is more than five. Almost one billion books were sold in 1960 in the

United States. Newspapers are read daily in over 86 per cent of the households in America. Magazines have gone up at the same to 110 per cent. Every day a million paperbacks are sold.

Dr. Austin: Dr. Huus has prepared a very scholarly, comprehensive summary of research in children's literature. There are two obvious comments: (1) there has been a great deal of attention to children's literature in recent years; (2) we need much future research. I would hope, in addition to individual research projects, we might have the establishment of research centers throughout the United States where well controlled, well designed studies could be undertaken on a nationwide basis, with funds to support them made available.

We certainly want to know more about children's interests today, the factors influencing their interests, the content of the material they are reading, the influence of mass media upon children. We need the results of research to help us do the kind of job we ought and want to do.

Dr. Bracken: Let's add to the list of definitions of interests the one by John Dewey: "concern for the outcome." A child is truly interested if he is concerned about the outcome of a story or poem or play of book.

I am glad that Dr. Huus summarized the research on interests. One factor affecting interests is that availability of books largely determine children's book preferences. One school in trying to determine the pupils' favorite books worked *within the limits of what was available.* The result was not what their favorites might have been but what was the most popular book within that particular collection.

Television has stimulated the reading interests of many children, and programs specifically designed to encourage a knowledge of children's books have been eminently successful. In one area a series of 16 weekly programs on children's books were studied by analyzing children's reactions through interviews and questionnaires by university students. Teachers and librarians who have alerted children to the programs and prompted them in viewing them reported tremendous interests and an unprecedented high rate of checkout for books featured on the programs.

Now about illustrations: Whether a child prefers red over blue or photographs over artists' drawings is not, I believe, as important as whether the illustrations are appropriate to the script they illustrate. The question is not: "Are fine-line drawings preferred by children?" It is: "Are fine-line drawings the type of illustration which presents visually the *spirit* of this particular script?" The literary quality of the writing *indicates* the preferred visuals.

APPENDIX

Bibliography of Children's Books

Alcott, Louisa M.	*Little Women.* (many editions)
Andersen, Hans C.	*Fairy Tales.* (many editions)
Ardizzone, Edward	*Tim and the Brave Sea Captain.* Walck, 1936
Arora, Shirley L.	*What Then, Ramon?* Follett, 1960
Asbjornsen, Peter C.	*East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon.* (many editions)
Atwater, Richard and Florence	*Mr. Popper's Penguins.* Little, 1938
Barrie, Sir James	*Peter and Wendy.* Scribner's, 1911
Bauer, Helen	*California Missions.* Doubleday, 1951
Behn, Harry	*Faraway Lurs.* World, 1963
Bemelmans, Ludwig	*Madeline.* Viking, 1939
	(A series of Madeline's adventures, ending with *Madeline in London,* 1961)
Bennett, Mabel	*Hidden Garden.* (out of print)
Benson, Sally	*Stories of the Gods.* Dial, 1940
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